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SOCIETY ON THE STAGE.



HOLDING the mirror up to nature may be the mission but has never been the strong point of the modern stage. So at least we may suppose from the evident

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rarity of the virtue in the time of Shakspeare; from all we have heard of the drama since his day; and from all we know of it in our own. Great actors have fulfilled the cen-

dition, or they would not have been great actors. Thus nobody can doubt what manner of man Garrick was after the grand tribute to his genius which Fielding puts into the mouth of Partridge. Partridge, as you may remember, could see nothing clever in Mr. Garrick's acting. 'Mr. Garrick,' he said, 'conducted himself as any gentleman would when placed in similar circumstances; whereas the man who played the king talked twice as loud, and made the most of everything he had to say—anybody could see that *he* was an actor.' It is such actors as this man who played the king that have given the prevailing characteristics to the stage; and they have been supported in so doing by audiences made up principally of Partridges.

When people in private life talk stilted language in a false voice, and have a peculiar affectation of manner, we call them 'theatrical;' or, if we are not too nice in our observance of the English language, 'stagey.' Neither word is intended to be flattering, and it follows that ordinary manners on the stage must not only deviate from ordinary manners off the stage, but deviate in an objectionable way. A conventional style prevails on the stage—much modified of late, but still prevailing—in a considerable degree, and in full force at the minor theatres. At the last-named establishments you may still see the standard old melodrama and the standard old farces in full bloom. The melodrama is not quite of so antiquated a stamp as, say, 'The Miller and his Men.' That celebrated piece is of the stage stagey to such an extent that when Mr. Buckstone, in his enthusiasm for 'auld lang syne,' brought it out in the primitive style a few years ago, a Haymarket audience could make nothing of it. A few old playgoers enjoyed the reminiscence; but the majority found it not only dull but stupid into the bargain. However, thoroughly pronounced representatives of the old school still have their place on the minor boards. The profligate nobleman still flourishes, so does the

poor but honest peasant girl, who declines to become his victim. The rightful heir is still to the front; and the wrongful heir still meets with his deserts at the end of the piece. The villainous lawyer who has forged the title deeds may yet be seen in his native harshness; and the cowardly fellow who has committed the murder, and receives all the kicks while the lawyer receives all the halfpence, shows no sign of disappearing. In a different class of melodrama you may still hear the old familiar sounds of 'Ter-ator, ter-emblo,' 'Release this lady,' 'Never but with life,' 'Then, villain, receive thy death.' Even the serious spectacle—that is to say, the spectacle which is not a burlesque—may yet be seen on the transpontine stage. Notable among pieces of this class is the far-famed 'Mazeppa,' which has just been revived once more at Astley's. Ducrow, I believe, first played the part of the Tartar prince, and after him another celebrity of the period, Cartlish. Nobody dreamed in those days of a lady representing the character; but in more advanced times Miss Menkin undertook the daring deed, and now another lady has followed in her footsteps. The piece itself is about as absurd a specimen of its kind as can well be conceived, and is made more so by its equestrian scenes. For horses, alas! are no longer the strong point of Astley's. The circus, in which Ducrow himself disported upon any number of bare-backed steeds; in which Miss Welford (I think that *was* the lady's name) enchanted the youth of the metropolis with her graceful and agile equestration; in which Mr. Widdiscomb opposed so gentlemanlike a demeanour and so discreet a view of things in general to the ribald conduct and conversation of the clown;—the circus has disappeared, and is turned into a pit, which is half stalls. The horses are therefore confined to the stage, where they never seemed at home, even in the old time. And such horses! In appearance they are more like cows or camels, and they have scarcely a kick or a canter among them. When the Polish

tyrant cries, 'Bring forth the fiery untamed steed!' there is a general shout of laughter, for everybody knows the kind of steed that will come. He is supposed to be

'A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
Who looked as though the speed of thought
Was in his limbs,'—

but in reality he is the quietest animal going, or, perhaps, I should say not going, for he evidently prefers the negative condition. And his quietness is less suggestive of good temper than of age and weakness. Looking at the acquiescent demeanour of the animal, you cannot resist a suspicion that there is a cabman somewhere outside, sitting upon a pair of empty shafts, and regaling himself with beer until the conclusion of the performance shall enable him to take another fare.

The musical parts of the piece are the best rendered; and these are supported by a young lady who, representing a Polish maiden, appropriately sings such songs as 'Cherry Ripe' during the intervals devoted to the preparation of the set scenes.

The old-fashioned farce is not so common as the old-fashioned melodrama, but it may still be seen on the stage. Among its principal stock characters is that of a gay young baronet—mostly Sir Charles or Sir Harry—who, although not described as being in the army, wears that mixture of military uniform and mufti which is considered such 'bad form' in the service. Thus he will wear an ordinary frock-coat and white waistcoat, but his trousers will have red stripes down the sides, and on his head will be a forage cap. He will have his cheeks very deeply rouged, and his hair very tightly curled. He will speak not exactly in a 'haw-haw' manner, but with something of it—quicker and sharper, and with a dismal affectation of sprightliness. His walk will be a swagger, and his way of proceeding characterized extensively by kissing the servant-maid upon every possible occasion.

A favourite opening for a farce of this kind is something like this: The scene is the exterior of a house,

supposed to be an inn, having a swinging sign in front, and a bench for travellers conveniently placed in the middle of the road—a mountainous country at back. Sir Charles or Sir Harry comes on with a prance, from which he never desists during the whole scene, progressing principally backwards and forwards across the stage, but diverging occasionally when running after the servant-maid or threatening to chastise the boots with his riding-whip. This instrument, by-the-way, he never fails to carry, and to flourish about as much as possible, when not engaged in the latter occupation, in connection with a white pocket-handkerchief.

The gay young baronet is fond of introducing himself to the audience in words to this effect, prancing up and down all the time, and flourishing his whip or his handkerchief, as the case may be:—

'Could anything be more absurd than my situation? Here am I, Sir Harry Hlover—the gay, the brilliant, the popular Sir Harry—the caressed of countesses, the adored of duchesses—the envied among men of fashion, and the distinguished among men of wealth for my five hundred thousand a year—here am I, in the height of the London season, with engagements twenty deep, dashing away on a sudden and finding myself, before I know where I am, at an obscure Welsh inn—and all through a little foot and ankle and a glimpse of a ringlet that I caught getting into the railway carriage at the Great Western station. I am afraid time will never teach me wisdom. However, being embarked in the chase, I will proceed. She alighted—she and that monster of an elderly gentleman—at the Llan—well, Llan—something—station, half a dozen miles from this, and, if I mistake not, are dwellers in this same charming hostelry. It was a delightful glimpse—that of the ringlet and the ankle—and it shall not be my fault if I do not make their better acquaintance. Here, you people of the house—waiter, landlord, some of you—come out here!

The people of the house, who are

of course quite accustomed to travellers arriving at all times in the day, and calling them out instead of seeking them inside, at once appear on the scene, and pay the distinguished traveller every attention; all but the boots, by-the-way, who, being Welsh, talks with a strong Yorkshire accent, and is more than a match for the baronet in conversation. As for the chambermaid already alluded to, she takes the privilege of her sex to keep him at a distance when she chooses, and to let him have only a limited number of salutes. But it is not necessary to describe the progress of the piece. Suffice it to say that the owner of the ankle and the ringlet—who duly makes her appearance while the abigail is resisting a too ardent advance on the part of the baronet—proves to be the cousin of that gentleman, to whom she has been engaged from early youth, though the pair have, curiously enough, never met since that interesting period. Some difficulties naturally now arise; but the young lady, after being very properly shocked at the conduct of her betrothed, forgives him in the end, and it is an understood thing that he is never to look at a maid-servant again. A charming idea for a piece, is it not?

The old-fashioned comedy is not so common to the boards as the old-fashioned farce. If truth must be told, it is rather apt to be dull; and five acts become a serious matter unless all are particularly well wanted. Of course, the comedies of the Restoration and their successors of Queen Anne's time, and the earlier Georgian era, are lively enough: their fault is, that they are rather *too* lively for our decorous days, when the public will tolerate any kind of freedom on the stage but freedom of language, especially if the author has the bad taste to be witty. Congreve and Farquhar have been played a great deal within the memory of many playgoers; but we never hear of them now. Goldsmith, too, is revived at intervals, and 'She Stoops to Conquer' has been recently meeting with considerable success at the

St. James's. Sheridan is not likely to be lost to the boards 'until the times do alter' very considerably; but 'The School for Scandal' and 'The Rivals' are produced at less frequent intervals than they were twenty years ago. As for Mrs. Inchbald, and a crowd of other writers of her time or thereabouts, their visits to the public are very few and far between. Their works indeed are less acceptable than those of an earlier period, for it is to them that the epithet old-fashioned may be most properly applied. A play in which the *dramatis personæ* represent an entirely different class of manners, as they wear an entirely different kind of costume, from those of our own day has an historical character. To be old-fashioned it must be nearer to our own time, and show us a kind of people of whom we have gained some idea from our grandfathers. In fiction of all kinds, this degree of distance as to time is found to be least favourable to attractiveness, and it is only writers of the highest power who are above the rule. The novels of thirty or forty years ago, which reflect contemporary manners, are usually found very dull reading compared with those of the last century, written under similar conditions—though, to be sure, there is another reason, which should be sufficient in itself, why our favourites of the last century should have the advantage.

The old-fashioned comedy proper is certainly not popular in these days, and the same may be said of many comedies produced in our own time, for until recently, it was considered necessary to write according to the old models, and there are still authors who adhere to the same standard, as there are writers of serious plays who cling to the Elizabethan style. There is a rage for realism setting in; but we are still accustomed on the London stage to a great many conventionalities and carelessness as to details which used to be taken as matters of course. Thus, who in real life salutes another person with 'Sir (or Madam), your most obedient?' Yet it is done in dozens of dramas

professing to represent the manners of to-day, which are continually in the playbills. There are many other exploded forms of speech regularly employed, even in new pieces. There are still theatres in London, too, in which you may see people of rank and fashion assembling in a drawing-room destitute of a carpet, and with no other furniture than is necessary for the business of the scene—that is to say, a small table and a couple of chairs. The latter, too, may still be seen dragged down towards the footlights in order that the occupant of the one may tell the occupant of the other the history of his life, or his love, or some other story to which the audience always manifest the most profound indifference. Somebody has said that such recitals always commence with, 'It is now seventeen years since I first met your father on foreign service;' but I have known them varied with, 'It is now twenty-one years since your mother became my bride.' I doubt whether a dozen of the audience ever have a very clear idea of the story, whatever it be. I should not omit to mention, too, that such a drawing-room as I have described is usually entered by the persons of rank and fashion aforesaid in a direct manner through the walls, the more limited accommodation afforded by the door being rigorously ignored; and further, that a gentleman will not unfrequently enter with his hat on, and keep 'the cap to its proper use' during his sojourn in the apartment. However, these blunders get balanced in the long run; for the same gentleman is as likely as not to appear out of doors, say in a street, with nothing upon his head but his hair, while the object of his affections, whom he meets in the same place, wears a delightfully *décolleté* costume, the young lady having been obliged, by dramatic exigencies, to dress early for the ball in the next scene. Such mistakes are not of course made at theatres which profess to be carefully conducted; but even these are not free from occasional lapses, when particular performers choose to have their own

way. There is no actor on the stage who studies details more than the gentleman who created the character of Lord Dundreary. But we nevertheless find his lordship, while on a visit at a country house, appearing in the drawing-room in his dressing-gown and slippers, not by accident, but as a matter of course; the other gentlemen present, not being conventional dandies with no ideas beyond the proprieties of dress, appearing in proper coats and boots. I am sorry to observe also, that in another piece the same eminent actor wears that horrible (in military eyes) mingling of uniform and mufti which I have noticed in the baronet of the old-fashioned farce.

Mr. Robertson's comedies are essentially dramas of the day. The author draws from life as it is, spurning precedents and throwing conventionalities to the winds. His pieces have been put upon the stage—certainly at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, where the best of them appeared—in accordance with his thoroughly realistic ideas. In the representation of 'Caste' and 'Society' there was no ground for cavil, so thoroughly true were the pictures presented to the life that is about us, and I am not here discussing them in any other aspect. In 'Ours,' the details of garrison life were rendered with great correctness. Even the uniforms had the unexampled merit of being correct to a button, though it was sad to see the colonel wearing a leather instead of a brass scabbard to his sword. And the scene in the Crimea—otherwise strikingly effective—was more than could be justified by probabilities. Fancy three ladies—two of them young and unmarried—going out unprotected to the seat of war, arriving before Sebastopol without having turned a hair of their sable mantles, and invading an officer's hut during his absence, while engaged with the enemy, who make a sortie while one of the fair visitors is making a pudding. Such playfulness on the part of the young ladies would be very appropriate to Aldershot, where we have known charming

things of the kind done, to the bewilderment of camp duty; but it is too much to carry the imagination in such a case to the Crimea. In other respects, the interior economy of the hut—supposing its occupants to be remarkably well provided for—is faithfully portrayed. One word, however, about finding the marshal's baton in the French soldier's knapsack. The incident is introduced for the sake of a point; but to find the baton there, not in the spirit but in the flesh—that is to say, in the wood—is surely a stretch of poetic licence. Does the author suppose that a marshal's baton is regularly served out in the French army as part of the kit of a private soldier? I have heard such a statement gravely made by persons who have put a literal interpretation upon the well-known figure of speech. But it is not to be believed that Mr. Robertson could be so foolish; and his joke is as forced as that of the gentleman who carried a nutmeg-grater in his pocket in order to punningly prove comparative superiority when he had entrapped his friends into making the remark that somebody or other was a great man.

We would not willingly be without any one of Mr. Robertson's plays, whatever failings may be found in some of them; but it is well that he should be warned that he will lose his character for realism if he persists in departing from nature as he has done in 'Dreams' and to some extent in 'School.' In the latter piece, for instance (it will always be welcome, if only for the sweet idyll of the milk-jug), there is an obvious absurdity in the idea of an examination of the pupils at an establishment for young ladies being attended by a number of swell men-about-town. The public want sterner stuff than this, in the way of probability, from the author of 'Caste' and 'Society;' and as he is well able to supply it he would do well to take the hint, or a time will come when playgoers will no longer be trifled with, when they will assert themselves, when they will rise as one man, and then deeds

will be done from the contemplation of which the well-regulated mind revolts. Already there are deep murmurings of repressed discontent such as precede the fall of empires.

Mr. Boucicault has long since left legitimate comedy for the drama of effect and sensation. He does not profess to represent society, of whatever class, as Mr. Robertson does. Effect is the first object, and sensation is made wherever possible. In his most successful dramas of the class in question he does not seek to hold the mirror up to nature with a view to a very literal reflection. He prefers to pick and choose—to be natural, no doubt, but to make nature subservient to his own ends. In the 'Colleen Bawn,' for instance—the best play of its kind that he has produced—he is generally truthful as regards character; but his incidents are conventionally romantic, and are treated accordingly. I make this distinction in no spirit of reproach. On the contrary, I consider such a use of material far more consistent with true art than subservience to a spirit of realism which is very well in its way, but is apt to make things too real. The same commendation must be given to pieces like the 'Peep o' Day,' which have owed their existence to similar inspiration. The unfortunate effect of such successes—which the authors themselves have not been able to rival—has been to call into existence a certain class of dramas in which the realism takes the principal instead of the subordinate part. As invention has failed—and how can invention help failing under the force of such peculiar demands?—it has been found necessary to get a set of material accessories together, and make plays to fit them. On a larger and more elaborate scale it is only the old story over again—the imaginary Mr. Crummies having the play written for the introduction of the pump and the washing-tube, or the real Mr. Davidge having the piece constructed especially for the performance of the pig. The latter is, I believe, an acknowledged incident in theatrical annals. The 'Streets of London' gave us an idea of what

this kind of thing might come to; and latterly we have had the 'Great City,' beyond which the force of realism—as far as material matters are concerned—can no further go. Its author, Mr. Halliday, had a right to try his hand in beating rivals upon their own ground, and the piece, regarded in the light of its own pretensions, was as good as a piece could be. But Mr. Halliday can do far better things. He has done far better things, and is still doing them; and nobody can know better than himself that the 'Great City' is rather low art. One of its most striking effects was the introduction upon the stage of a real Hansom cab. Surely there must be something wrong in the popular appreciation of the drama, if a Hansom cab, which we pass without notice twenty times a-day in the streets, gains the applause of a London audience in preference to the best dialogue and the best situations imagined by the author. The fault lies with the audience, doubtless; but the author and the manager are surely open to objection if they meet such weaknesses half way. However, this kind of attraction is well-nigh used up. You cannot go much beyond a Hansom cab in your rage for realism; and we suspect that the more sensitive portion of the public will not be much troubled for the future with novelties of the kind. Mr. Halliday, for instance, is devoting himself to works of a better and more congenial character, and has thoroughly outgrown the 'Great City,' as nobody who has seen 'Checkmate' and 'Love's Doctor' can doubt—to say nothing of 'Little Em'ly,' which, adapted as it is from Mr. Dickens' novel, evinces an amount of care and skill that would have made an original piece. Mr. Halliday, by-the-way, does not profess more realism than need be in his dramas of society, as he holds our old friend the mirror up to natural conditions, and is certainly not a representative of conventionalities for their own sake.

Mr. Byron, who, as we all know, is capable of the wildest burlesques, is now steadily cultivating what

may be called the natural drama—in the sense that wine merchants say natural sherry, that is to say, an article free, as far as possible, from those 'fortifying' additions, without which it was supposed impossible to please the public palate. It is pleasant to find that he is as successful in the higher as in the lower walk of his art. Mr. Burnand has also essayed serious writing, but not as yet with much attempt at originality. 'The Turn of the Tide,' for instance, is taken from a novel, and, though an excellent piece, can scarcely be classed among the 'natural' order; while 'Morden Grange,' also taken from a novel, is 'branded' with conventionalism beyond even the public power of appreciation. Mr. Burnand will, doubtless, do better things, and when he has worked a little more of the fun out of him, will, I dare say, consent to settle down into the sober position of one of the best dramatists of the day.

I have now referred to all of the five gentlemen whose works may be said to monopolise the London stage, as far as regular supply is concerned. Mr. Boucicault and Mr. Byron have an advantage over their brother authors in being actors also, and able to appear in person in their own plays. Mr. Boucicault has not, of late years, undertaken the more active line of duty; but everybody knows his claims as a thorough artist in the profession. Mr. Byron has only just begun—in London at any rate—to appear on the boards; but his success has been so considerable as to leave little doubt of his remaining. He will probably play only in special parts, like Mr. Sothorn, with whose peculiar turn of talent he has a great deal in common.

Mr. Sothorn has had much to do with the new movement, which insists upon society being represented on the stage. But, curiously enough, he began, as we have seen, with a caricature; and his subsequent impersonations, of a quieter nature, were, after all, not more like gentlemen of the world than similar characters had been previously made by Mr. Charles Ma-

thews, and a few—not very many, it must be confessed—of his school. But there was a cry that gentlemen—that is to say, persons who could play gentlemen—were scarce upon the stage, and Mr. Sothern, apart always from Lord Dundreary, was recognized as one who could, as far as himself was concerned, supply the deficiency. Here is a man, said the public, who lives in good society and can depict its manners without going out of his way. Mr. Sothern, like others on the stage fulfilling the same conditions, was of course able to do this; but, somehow, this actor's most 'gentleman-like' characters have not been the most successful. The public always return to their first loves, and when they cannot get Lord Dundreary, they are likely to prefer 'Brother Sam' to the actor's less broad creations. The verdict is a little unfair to Mr. Sothern, who would perhaps have made a better stand had his introduction taken place in a non-sensational character. But the 'gentlemanly interest' is strong in its demands upon the stage. There are a large class, in fact, who want plays acted by gentlemen for gentlemen—as one might suppose, a dramatic version of the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' accepting that journal's own account of itself; and much the same requirement is made in the case of ladies, as regards manners and appearance, though beauty and talent are of course republican institutions with the sex, and are independent of conventional distinctions. The consequence is a new qualification for an engagement at a theatre—that the candidate should not be an actor.

It is not to be supposed that a man who is not an actor must necessarily be a gentleman; but it must be said for the amateur element on the stage that it is principally represented by persons who, without the help of their adopted profession, have a right to be so ranked. And their influence upon the drama has certainly been beneficial, not only in their own persons, but on account of a certain standard of taste which they establish and maintain.

There are men among the regular professionals who are just as good gentlemen in every sense of the term; but they are apt to be spoiled by the traditions of stage business, and to do less justice to themselves than they would had they made their staff at the present time. On the other hand, the volunteers—as we may call them in contradistinction to the regulars—are not always sufficiently strong meat for the demands of a good play—a play with a healthy appetite for vigorous acting. Their performance is frequently pale as their cheeks would be without the rouge, and the hare's foot is an institution that cannot yet be dispensed with at a theatre, either in its figurative or its literal sense. But as such men get matured they make efficient actors in every acceptance of the term, and exercise, as has been said, a decidedly beneficial influence upon the stage. Of the ladies I must speak with reserve. In the theatre, as in the world, there are ladies and ladies; but the boards were never wanting in grace and beauty, and the presence of women who ought to have been duchesses and countesses by natural right, as so many indeed have become by right of their husbands. And who would dare to say that they are not represented in the present day? There is no want of actresses of the present generation who are able to portray the manners of society of a very different kind from that depicted in 'Formosa.' And with regard to the much-discussed merits of this piece, I may here remark that it is one which ought not to have been either written or produced. It holds the mirror up to a certain kind of nature that ought not to be, and with a great deal of distortion into the bargain. Supposing the delineation to be thoroughly accurate, it still does not follow that because certain evils exist they are fitted for representation on the stage. People go to the theatre, after all, for amusement rather than instruction, and where instruction is given it should be instruction of a beneficial kind. 'Formosa' is calculated to instruct people in some things that they

ought not to know; and in the case of those who *do* know them, there is an obvious objection to such subjects being made matters for diversion. You might with equal propriety convert physical diseases as moral diseases to dramatic use; and who would like to make merry over a vivid representation of a case of small-pox or scarlet fever, to say nothing of the sensation incidents of epilepsy?

A question arising out of the influx of the volunteer element upon the stage was recently discussed in a weekly journal—I mean the position of the actor in social life. The negro's place in nature has afforded occasion for considerable difference of opinion among scientific men, but, compared with the actor's place in society, it would be facile of solution. Hitherto people have not troubled themselves much upon the subject. Most of us have been content to consider the actor as we consider the members of other callings. Supposing that we had no objection to the profession upon conscientious grounds—and some people really have even in these enlightened days—we would associate with him if he complied with the usual conditions which make a man a gentleman, and if he did not we would have as little to do with him as possible, or decline the honour of his acquaintance altogether. But in these days something more, it seems, is demanded. When we meet an actor it is impossible to say who he may happen to be. He may be a disguised duke, a mute inglorious marquis, a retired viscount, a baron who does not wish the fact to be generally known, and the chances are, at any rate, that he is a man of good family with a university training, a position in a county, and perhaps a rank derived from a commission in the Guards. Such men require a different recognition from society than that which is generally accorded to the profession, and complain that they are looked down

upon because they are on the stage. I do not believe anything of the kind. Some people of rank—who are *only* people of rank—may sneer at them for their connection with the stage, just as they would sneer at them for taking to any other pursuit that has the vulgar look of being a means to 'get a living.' But our volunteers should despise demonstrations of the kind. The people best worth knowing, of any rank, will not make such fools of themselves. Moreover, let them remember what Alfred Tennyson says—

'An artist, sir, should rest in Art,
And waive a little of his claim—
To have the deep poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame.'

And the deep dramatic heart, I suppose, is equally worthy of respect. Moreover, our volunteers should remember that they are volunteers—that they have gone into the profession of their own free will and keep some other men out of it. As regards social status, therefore, they have no right to dictate, but should take their chance with the rest of their class.

It is rather amusing to see, from a complaint in a daily paper, that the amateur mania has extended to the supers. The regulars, it seems, even in their humble line, are being superseded by volunteers, who are taking their places in the pantomimes and actually perform for nothing. How about *their* social status? I should like to be informed upon the point. It is sad to hear of this supercession, for which the managers are the persons to blame; but otherwise the volunteer movement in connection with the drama has certainly done good; and, apart from absurd exaggerations of realism—especially when extended to unnecessary accessories in the way of material—there is a better approach in the present day than there has ever been before to the proper representation of Society on the Stage.

S. L. B.



FROM SAINT LUKE'S HEAD TO THE CAT.

IT is the busiest, the noisiest, the most hardworking and practical, and, with one or two exceptions, the most unseavoursy street in all London. It is a narrow street—pavements, roadway, and all, would scarce measure twenty feet. It is not a long street. From top to bottom and on either side the numbers on the houses fall short of a hundred and eighty. At one end of this street, which is Whitecross Street, the head of Saint Luke stands sentry; at the other end the Cat constantly guards the corner.

On a Saturday night the street in question is impassable to all save those whose business carries them there. The said business is 'marketing,' the eking out of the wages of the work of the week just expired towards the support of that grand old institution of the English poor man, a comfortable Sunday's dinner, and in making such other domestic purchases as may be. Standing in the shadow of the gloomy old church on the opposite side of the way, Whitecross Street, after dark on a Saturday night, presents a strange spectacle. As far as the eye can reach, a dense mass of higgling haggling humanity blocks the pavement and chokes up the roadway, while the deafening din of a thousand leather-lunged hucksters, bellowing the price and prime quality of their goods, blends to make a sullen roar quickset with shrill and sudden exclamations that sound like cries of pain, while the glare of gas and the smoke and flame of naphtha lamps fill the atmosphere with a luminous sulphur-coloured haze that takes not kindly to the night clouds, but piles up above the narrow gut it was belched from and lingers there till midnight, when the roaring below ceases and the flames are extinguished, and by-and-by the clinging mist is dispersed by the keen winds that herald the morning.

It is when the glare is at its brightest, the roar at its fullest, that Saint Luke and the Cat are

most vigilant. The eyes of the former twinkle merrily in a score of gay gas-jets, and the many mouths of the saint, represented by the frequent doors of the establishment in which he dwells, hang ajar and on nimble leash in hungry expectation of fools to devour; while the Cat at the other end of the street licks her whiskers and purs deceitful promises of rich cordials and of cream of the valley, her claws, which her velvet paws conceal, all the time itching to scratch the hard earnings out of the pouches of the silly mice that venture within her reach.

Whitecross Street is, to all intents and purposes, a market-place, and its peculiarity is that it is made so entirely by costermongers and barrowmen. On a Saturday night, supposing that one preserved courage enough to push his way amongst the motley crowd, he would possibly overlook this peculiarity in the tremendous rave and hubbub that prevail; but at a comparatively quiet time—Monday morning, for instance—it is plainly apparent. It was Monday morning when I was there, and no longer ago than a month.

The tide of trade at that time was decidedly at slack, and yet the number of barrows amounted to no less than a hundred and fifty-four; stationary and drawn up in line to the curbing of the exceedingly narrow pavement. It would be difficult to enumerate the variety of articles for sale on these barrows. Every sort of greengrocery, of course, and a very large supply of fish—many tons of it, I should say—perfectly fresh and wholesome, and retailed at prices that, could they have witnessed, would have caused those domestic economists who write to the 'Times' to stare in amazement. As many perhaps as half the number of the barrows were devoted to the sale of edibles: the remainder, with the broad boards laid on them, served as repositories for anything and everything, including tinware, and crockeryware, and

secondhand tools, and cheap millinery, and secondhand scraps and flinders of ribbons and feathers, and muslins, in which the fashionable females of the locality take delight: and men's hats as low as sixpence each, and women's boots quite new and generally at the disposal of Mr. Moses—good-looking articles, but undoubtedly awful rubbish, at two shillings and threepence the pair. Everything offered for sale in Poverty's market must be cheap, dirt cheap. Here is a piled-up heap of fancy brooms and brushes branded with the Queen's brand, and doubtless outcasts from some government office. These are going at a ridiculously low figure, as little as a halfpenny being asked for a by no means 'bald and impotent' scrubbing-brush, while serviceable long brooms fetched no more than twopence. Job lots of wall-papers for covering room-walls; splendid pictures at a shilling a pair, for their further decoration after they are covered. Knives and forks, handy bits of stuff for towelling, doormats, secondhand coats and waistcoats, bits of carpet, copper-lids, haberdashery, savealls for candles, and a thousand other things.

The shops (with a mighty exception, to be presently mentioned) make no great show. In such a market-place it might be expected that butchers' shops would be numerous; but from St. Luke's Head to the Cat they only number thirteen. Of bakers' shops there are less by three. Pawnbroking is accounted a good trade in squalid regions, the fourpenny and sixpenny pawns telling up very handsomely. Whitecross Street contains but two pawnbrokers—however, legitimate establishments, that is to say, that fearlessly and lawfully hang out their triplet of golden spheres as a trade sign; but the number of unlicensed pawnbrokers abounding in that neighbourhood is alarming to think of. On either side, Whitecross Street is skirted by a complete network of courts and alleys (those to the right communicating with that most awful of London thoroughfares known as Golden Lane), and each

has at least one 'leaving-shop.' You may know the leaving-shop at a glance by the peculiar sort of goods they put in the windows and outside the doors for sale—the 'lots' as a rule being kept together just as they were brought for money to be advanced on them. And if space were here allowed me, I should much like to express at length my opinion of these places. In short, I don't believe that they are nearly so bad as they are painted; and when I spoke of their great number as something alarming to think of, I rather meant as regards the reckless non-recognition of the law by the leaving-shop keepers. Of this much I am certain, it is as wrong as wrong can be to suppose that a 'leaving-shop' is invariably merely another name for a systematic repository for stolen goods; and I don't care in the least what the police say to the contrary. The police very frequently affect to be authorities in matters of which they are quite ignorant. I don't mean to say that the 'leaving-shop' anywhere is a desirable institution, but practically its operations are as conducive to the convenience of its customers as the establishments of Mr. Attenborough. It is perhaps not generally known that it is only such goods as the legitimate pawnbroker rejects that are carried to the 'leaving-shop.' As a rule the regular pawnbroker will not negotiate a smaller loan than fourpence; if the security offered is worth less, he turns it away; but the leaving-shop keeper will lend as little as twopence. The regular pawnbroker will have nothing to do with pots and pans, or odd knives and forks, or a kettle or a fender, or any other of the more unwieldy and shabby household gods of the poverty-stricken; whereas the leaving-shop keeper will receive them and advance a loan on them with much cheerfulness. If the leaving-shop will not have them, the scratching of the wolf at the door being inexorable, they must be sold outright, and a considerable stride be at the same time made towards the work-house.

To return, however, to Whitecross

Street and its shops. Besides the ten bakers, and the thirteen butchers, and the two pawnbrokers, there are five cookshops, six establishments (as airy and open as any public soup kitchen) for supplying their patrons with hot stewed eels and pea-soup, to be served in small yellow basins with iron spoons, and to be eaten standing either at the counter or on the pavement at the door. Then there are five shops that do a roaring trade in what in Whitecross Street is known as 'awful,' which term is probably a corruption of 'offal,' and applies to the heads, hearts, and livers of oxen and the feet and intestines of sheep. In most cases the cat's-meat business is included in the 'awful' category.

But there yet remains to be mentioned the shops that in Whitecross Street figure more prominently than any—the gin-shops and the beer-shops. I must confess that I am not far advanced in teetotal principles; but when I had reckoned up the full number of these dens abounding in that brief narrow street—when I had entered one and all of them, and taken note of their interiors—and when I came to reflect on the terrible quantity of poisonous, maddening liquor that in the ordinary way of business they must dispense, and the class of persons it was dispensed among, I think that I never felt more kindly disposed towards Sir Wilfrid Lawson, or so much regretted that his recent bill for the better regulation of the liquor traffic was shelved.

At the same time I was confirmed in my previously-expressed opinion that the noble band of which Sir Wilfrid is so worthy a leader did not make the most of the materials at his command; neither him nor his colleagues. Let any one who doubts this refer to the speeches that at the time were made in the House of Commons. Nothing new was brought before the great body of hon. members who were to be convinced of the necessity for public-house reform. The same old ground was gone over. It was related how much good barley was misused; how many thousands or

millions of gallons of gin and rum and brandy were swallowed annually in the three kingdoms, and how much per week and per diem this meant for each individual, and what *must* be the deplorable result of such monstrous indulgence in intoxicating stimulants. But how much more to the purpose would it have been had Sir Wilfrid Lawson clapped before the eyes of hon. members living pictures of the horrors it was his righteous purpose to mitigate—pictures photographed on the spot and only the day before?

With this object in view, he could not have done better than paid a visit, such as I did, to that wonderful narrow thoroughfare with Saint Luke's Head at one corner and the Cat at the other. He would have been enabled to tell his amazed audience that here was a street at the very core of London's busy heart hedged in on all sides by poverty and squalor, a street consisting of less than two hundred shops, of which *one in every ten* was either a gin-shop or a beer-shop. I like to be particular in these matters, and so will enumerate the signs by which these eighteen beer and gin-shops, in a length of seven hundred yards, are known:—St. Luke's Head, Crown, Britannia Tap, Spread Eagle, British Banner, Black Boy, British Queen, George, Branton's, Horns, Warwick Arms, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Jamaica Stores, Two Brewers, Rum Punchon, The Yellow House, The Cherry Tree, and The Cat.

But, the reader may suggest, it should be borne in mind that Whitecross Street is a market-place, and that although at a time of slackness the number of these places may appear alarmingly great, at high tide of business it is probable that they no more than suffice to provide for the modest requirements of the multitude.

I, too, thought that probably this might be the case. To be sure, there was a general slackness in the street. The butcher-boys were scraping clean the ensanguined boards and chopping-blocks, while their master gossiped with his neighbours; the eel-shop man, having several hours of leisure before him, calmly smoked

his short pipe as he chopped parsley for flavouring the contents of the great pot. Business generally was 'dull,' probably the gin-shops and the beer-shops were so too. The only way to settle the question was to look in and see.

I did so, and am almost afraid to state the result of my 'looking in.' It was Monday morning, be it remembered, between twelve and one o'clock; a time when, in such a neighbourhood as this, idlers and workers might be supposed to be at home at dinner. Nevertheless, every gin-shop, every beer-house, was doing a thriving trade. Of the male drinkers I took no count; but it is a grim and terrible fact that within that length of seven hundred yards, at noon on a sunshiny day, one hundred and forty-five women were guzzling gin and beer as they clustered about those eighteen dingy, evil-smelling bars.

Many of the women had children with them, some big enough to clutch the pewter pot within their greedy, grimy little hands, and swig heartily at it; many so small that for the present they had to be content to fuddle at secondhand as they huddled under the ragged shawl that the drunken slatterns wore slouched about their shoulders. Some were already so drunk that the barmen and maids were remonstrating with them because of their hoggish behaviour and refusing them another drop, even though—under stress of gin already imbibed—they sank down on their knees and begged it. Others were only half-mellow as yet, and made

the very walls ring with their boisterous mirth; but gossip was the order of the day—grouping together over porter pots and gin measures and chattering with the volubility of demented magpies. Here and there was discovered a group of three or four addicted to the manly habit of gambling as well as drinking, and were tossing up their halfpence and calling 'heads' or 'tails' in a manner edifying to behold.

In one dirty little beer-shop, in the vicinity of a place known as Bridgewater Gardens, not a man was to be seen, but *eighteen* women, ragged, squabbling, dirty wretches all of them, many with black eyes and cut faces, were swilling out of quart measures, while their babies sprawled in the sawdust and made toys of the spittoons.

At another house there was a gang of drunken women at a bar, and, all in sight of the other customers, one of them—she was drunk—proceeded to divest herself of her decent-looking gown, which she handed, rolled up, to a companion, who hurried off with it—to where if not to the pawnshop?

Only that I am unwilling to incur a charge of 'piling up the agony,' I could give the reader twenty such pictures. In Whitecross Street, however, they are constantly on view; and I sincerely hope that the next time the subject of drinking and drinking-shops is brought before Parliament some humane and courageous member will go there and report to honourable gentlemen assembled what he saw.

J. G.



WYBROWE'S WILL.

An Old Story.

By 'Rux.'

I.

A DEFERENTIAL tap at the outer door; then the heavy portière slid noiselessly aside; and then the low-pitched voice of my man Ward woke me from my curaçoa-and-cavendish-begotten morning dream. It was annoying. The Capid-and-Psyche clock on the mantelpiece had just struck one; it was a divinely-tempered English July day; the rough macadam (so dear to the souls of King, and Kesterton, and the rest of the fraternity, and so dear to the pockets of their patrons) had been ground smooth by the *fervida rota* of the broughams and barouches of a bloated aristocracy, and, in Bruton Street at least, vexed my soul and jarred my nerves no longer. I had made an admirable knife-and-fork breakfast; had disposed of my usual pile of letters from men, women, and creditors; had carefully filled and carefully lighted the big, black brûle-gueule; had yielded myself with a 'lazy sigh to the soft embraces of my pet lounging-chair drawn up close to the open window where the sun-shades flapped languidly over miniature hanging gardens—I had done all this, and, oblivious for a while of debts and duns and entanglements, was falling fast into a blissful trance, like a Celestial in a state of bhang, when—

'Please, sir,' said Ward, drawing back the portière. Brought back to sublunary matters thus, I looked at him reproachfully.

'I thought I told you——' I murmured.

'Yes, sir—I know!' he responded, anxious to vindicate my confidence in him; 'you wasn't to be disturbed. More I shouldn't have, sir; only—it's my lady! It was no good trying to stop her. And she's coming up.'

Now 'my lady' meant Lady Medusa Crusingham, my aunt; and, as Ward said, it was no good trying to stop her.

I drew the amber mouthpiece of the big, black brûle-gueule slowly from between reluctant lips; laid down the half-smoked pipe with a covetous sigh, and a faintly muttered strong ejaculation; and resigned myself to my fate.

The portière slid aside once more; and Aunt Medusa pranced through the opening straight down upon me, with a more determined expression than usual upon her aristocratic face.

Ward made a rapid exit; and the outer door closed behind him.

'My dear aunt!' I drawled, picking myself up languidly, and moving a step or two to meet my infiction.

'Frank!' said Aunt Medusa, with ominous abruptness, 'sit down again. I've something to say to you.'

She folded herself, as it were,—Aunt Medusa never seemed to sit down like ordinary humanity; she was very lean and abnormally long; and, I fancied, had a hinge somewhere about the middle of her, and nowhere else—into a straight, knotty-backed, mediæval chair that formed a portion of my *bric-à-brac*, and that, regarded as a resting-place, invariably made me shudder; folded her long thorough-bred *gris-perle* gloved hands; and held me with her glittering eye.

I felt I was likely to be in for a *mauvais quart d'heure*. The charges that might be brought against me were so manifold, that I only speculated, in that moment's breathing-time I got, which particular one I was to be called to plead to on this occasion.

I thought of that neatly red-taped and docketed sheaf of bills in the bottom drawer of my davenport, all impartially unpaid; of my losses on 'The Robber' last month at Ascot; of my subsequent (and consequent) transactions with Mr. Nepthali of Jermyn Street; of my harmless (but expensive) flirtation with Mdlle

Aurélié, *belle-du-ballet*; of my more dangerous (and more expensive) affairs with Kate Tyrrell of the Queen's Theatre Royal, and Mrs. Montessor of London, Paris, and the Bads generally; and I was rather curious to know where Aunt Medusa was going to break ground; for that high-actioned, high-nosed, high-tempered relative of mine, with all three peculiarities more strongly marked than ever, was obviously about to come down on me for something.

She had bought and paid for me (on the whole, rather dearly I should say) years ago—when I was a younger son at Eton, with an amiable proclivity for coming to every species of grief; and furnished me with the means of decent subsistence at Oxford—I need hardly say, with the bland co-operation of the long-suffering tradesmen of that pleasant place; and, since, had opened such a credit for me with Coutts's as, with a good deal more of similar co-operation, enabled me to make a fair show in the flesh in London and like Pandemonia. Moreover, as she had quarrelled hopelessly with the Governor, and hated my elder brother Earls court, Captain of Horse Guards, rather more viciously, if possible, than that amiable personage hated her, I had every reason to expect that I should come in for all she had to leave by-and-by—an expectation which I don't doubt was shared by Mr. Nephthali, and others of his calling and persuasion, and would account for the tenderness they had hitherto shown in the plucking of their pigeon.

So that, you see, Aunt Medusa had acquired the right of bullying me to any extent, and had been by no means slow to exercise it. Only, she had been usually wont to send for me to Park Lane when she wanted to do it. What could have brought her to Bruton Street at this undue hour, this morning?

'Lucky Katie hadn't happened to drop in to lunch to-day!' I mentally ejaculated—'Katie' meant Miss Tyrrell, who would sometimes honour me with a morning call after an early rehearsal—or Charlie

Twistleton and his bull-pup. I don't know which would have been the worse. Well, Aunt Medusa, I went on aloud, for I was getting rather nervous under the prolonged gaze of the dowager's glittering eye, 'and what have you to say to me?'

Here I glanced ruefully at the brûlé-gueule on the little table at my elbow, thinking I could have stood what was coming better if I could have had it between my lips again.

'Just this, Frank,' said Lady Medusa; 'I saw, like every one else, the way you were going on last night with that horrible woman.'

I knew what my crime was then—Annie Montessor.

'What horrible woman?' I asked innocently; 'and how did I go on?'

'You know what I mean. That Mrs. Montessor. Montessor, indeed!' snorted Aunt Medusa, in indignant parenthesis; 'her name's no more Montessor than mine is, I'll be bound.'

'So I've heard,' I responded meekly; 'but if she likes to call herself so, why—and her Grace of Fitz-Fulke has taken her up this season, you know.'

Now her Grace of Fitz-Fulke is one of the leaders of the Elect; with power to bind and loose, and make and mar; a very incarnation of Propriety; to be taken up of whom is to gain the meed of virtue, without necessarily (as was perhaps the case with Annie Montessor) undergoing the martyrdom thereof.

'The Duchess is a fool!' snapped my uncompromising relative sharply; forgetting, as I fondly hoped, her wrath against me in her wrath at the cogeny of my arguments; 'the Duchess is a fool! This Mrs. Montessor—indignant snort again—' this Mrs. Montessor has completely got over her by going to hear Mrs. Barthwaite preach at the Pantechnicon every Sunday; and that sort of thing.'

'Well, she deserves something for that!' I ventured to suggest; 'it must be decidedly the reverse of festive; and—'

But Aunt Medusa wasn't to be turned from her point. She had come to Bruton Street to hold forth

to me on the heinous nature of my flirtation with the dangerous Circe that every woman in London envied, and hated, and said spiteful things about; and she did it.

'The long and short of it is, Frank,' Aunt Medusa said, by way of general conclusion, opening and shutting her under-jaw like a steel-trap between each word, and nodding her head at me emphatically—'the long and the short of it is, that you must marry. And the sooner the better. There!'

I wasn't certainly prepared for this heroic remedy; but I managed to make answer with tolerable composure.

'Well, yes; I suppose I must when the right woman asks me. But that hasn't happened to me yet; so—'

'Fiddlestick!' ejaculated Lady Medusa. 'You'll be good enough to do as you're bid. I mean you to be married before Christmas!'

There was no question that she looked as if she meant it, at any rate. The situation was becoming rather alarming.

'Who is she?' I asked, submissively.

'She is very nice, Frank,' Aunt Medusa said, propitiated; 'but I shan't tell you who she is till you've seen her. What are you going to do this afternoon?'

I had intended to spend most of it in Annie Montessor's boudoir; so I said—

'Going to hear Wigan at Apsley House, I think.'

'Oh!' said Aunt Medusa; 'well; then you had better come down to Mrs. Leo Huntingdon's garden-party at Fulham afterwards. I have a card for you.'

'Very well,' I assented. And then, as a thought struck me—'Is she to be there?'

'Perhaps!' replied Lady Medusa, rising all of a piece upon her hinge, and preparing to depart. 'Don't be later than four, mind. No; you can't see me downstairs in that dress!'—as I dutifully moved towards the door with her—'Ward will open the door for me. Good-bye!'

And my aunt was gone.

I fell to smoking again, speculating who my Fate was to be. I had no thought of avoiding it. It was less trouble to be married than to combat a resolution of Aunt Medusa's; and I am, naturally, the laziest man of my acquaintance. Moreover, I couldn't afford to quarrel with her, even if I had the energy. I concluded, as Artemus says, 'to let things slide.'

Presently, enter without any further warning than a tattoo with her parasol-handle on the door-panel Kate Tyrrell of the Queen's, just come from rehearsal.

'Give me something to eat, Frank,' Miss Tyrrell says, with rather unflattering abruptness, 'I'm famished! That wretched Mallaby called the new piece at ten; and I've been at it ever since. What's this? Pâté d'Amiens? I like that. And truffled ham. And strawberries. Is there any cream? Yes. And maraschino jelly. And Vienna rusks. I shall do capitally! Will I have tea or coffee? Neither, thank you *très-cher*. Perhaps you will give me some hock and Nassau seltzer—I'm dying of thirst.'

Ward brought the beverage she wanted, and retired. Miss Tyrrell ate her luncheon without troubling herself much to talk to me till she got to the strawberries and cream; between the spoonfuls of a huge plateful of which she told me all about Lifter's new and (in the French, at all events) original piece they were studying at the theatre; at least all about her own part in it: and how Lifter had complimented her; and how jealous the other women were of her; and what dresses she was to wear; and so forth.

When the strawberries were all gone, and the cream-ewer was empty, and she had dipped her pretty little fingers in eau de Cologne and water, and I had dried them for her, Miss Tyrrell helped herself to a cigarette from the box on the mantelpiece, lit it scientifically at the taper perennially burning there, rolled a low chair up to the window opposite mine, deposited herself therein, crossed her pretty ankles à mon *'intention* on

the footstool, and blew little blue clouds of Pharesli tobacco all about her.

'You look awfully bored, I think, Frank,' she observed, for the first time at leisure to contemplate my physiognomy; 'what's been teasing you?'

'Nothing, *mon enfant*,' I responded. 'Aunt Medusa has been here, that's all. That tells on a man at this time of day, you know.'

'And what has Aunt Medusa been doing to you?'

'Nothing. At least, nothing to what she's going to do!'

Miss Tyrrell interrogated me with a pretty movement of her admirably pencilled eyebrows.

'She's going to marry me, Katie!' I replied.

'She can't!' responded Katie, briskly. 'I fancy Miss Tyrrell didn't like the notion of matrimony in my case, except on one slightly improbable condition.'

'She can't! It's against the law, you know!'

'I mean, she's going to marry me to some one.'

'Who?'

'I don't know.'

Miss Tyrrell raised her eyebrows again, and puffed at her cigarette.

'And you mean to let her, Frank?'

'How can I help it? If she says I am to marry, I must, you know.'

'Ridiculous!'

'Perhaps so; but unavoidable.'

She raised her shoulders this time.

'Where are you going this afternoon?'

'Garden party at Fulham,' I replied.

'Where you'll be bored to death. Come down and dine with us at Richmond. Colocynth makes up a party. That will be much better for you, Frank.'

'And for you too, *ma belle*,' I thought, understanding the manoeuvre.

'Can't,' I said; determining that if I broke faith with Aunt Medusa it should be to go to Mrs. Montessor's, who I knew wouldn't be at Mrs. Huntingdon's.

'Nonsense!' Miss Tyrrell said,

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imperiously. And then coaxingly, 'Do, Frank. It's the last night I shall have free. They're going to bring out the new piece to-morrow.'

But I was proof against this Circe for the nonce; and finally, Circe having had her luncheon, and finished her cigarette, grew piqued, and got up.

'You won't come, then?'

'Couldn't. I promised Aunt Medusa.'

'Bah! She's to be at Fulham, I suppose—*la future*?'

'I shouldn't wonder.'

'And you really mean to—'

'To do as I'm told? I believe so.'

'I've no patience with you!' she said, fairly savage; 'you've no more will of your own than a child!'

'Never had,' I responded. 'If I had, I should go with you to Richmond. As it is, Aunt Medusa decides for me; and I'm going to Fulham.'

'Bon voyage, alors!' she answered, moving away towards the door. When her hand was on the handle she stopped, finding I hadn't risen to stop her.

'Good-bye, Frank! I must go.'

'Good-bye, my child,' I returned, beginning to wish she would.

She came quietly across the room again, and stood beside my chair.

'It's awfully unkind of you,' she murmured, putting her warm little gloved hand into mine, and giving me the benefit of her dark eyes, 'Do come!'

But I held firm, and didn't. And Miss Tyrrell went away in dudgeon and a miniature brougham shortly afterwards.

Just as I had awoke to the consciousness that it was time to dress, Charlie Twistleton and his bull-pup came in.

The latter always evinced a deadly animosity to my person; and invariably flew at my legs whenever he caught sight of me: as he did on this occasion.

Practice, however, had made me perfect in my system of defence; and I kicked him dexterously back again to his admiring owner, who quieted him by the application of his own boot-heel.

'Good-plucked one, ain't he?' Charlie said. 'Duced near nipped you, Frank. He'd better have something to eat. Ward, fetch me a bit of meat of some kind—raw, mind!' Over which refreshment the bull-pup continued to growl at me at intervals.

'Going to this woman's at Fulham?' asked Twistleton, by-and-by.

'Supposed to be,' I said.

'Same here. I'll drive you down, if you like. Cut away and dress.'

I went and dressed; thinking that as the matter was thus decided for me I'd better go to Fulham, and not to Mrs. Montessoro's.

'We'll leave the pup here,' Charlie said, when I emerged from my bedroom. 'He'd be in the way, perhaps, in the trap. Ready? Come along.'

Charlie's cab was waiting below in Bruton Street. The next minute we were charging at his usual pace through Berkeley Square.

'I say,' said my Jehu, lolling his arms on the apron, and tranquilly indifferent to the fact that we had shaved by a ponderous coal-waggon with about an inch to spare. 'I say, Frank, I hope the deuce she's there! That's all I'm going for—to see her.'

'All I'm going for, too,' I muttered, thinking of my *future*; 'who do you mean, though?'

'Woman everybody's talking about, to be sure.'

'And who's she?'

'Who?' Charlie drawled, as we swung sharply round the corner into Piccadilly, and sent the stock in trade of the street stall-keeper into the middle of the road; 'who? Why, Mrs. Wybrowe, of course! Gad! we smashed something, didn't we?'

II.

'But who is Mrs. Wybrowe? And why is everybody talking about her?' I persisted.

'Longish story,' Charlie responded; 'romantic, and that. However, old Upas told me all about it last night; and here it is.'

And this, briefly, and divested of Twistleton's peculiar diction, was the story.

Wybrowe, Brazilian millionaire,

etat. seventy, or thereabouts, married Helen Chetwynd, impecunious belle, etat. nineteen, daughter of a British diplomat in those parts; and, after two years of connubial felicity, considerably dies. Wybrowe is jealous as a Spaniard; and his jealousy looks beyond his own life. So he leaves a terrible will behind him. This cunningly-contrived document provides: that his widow, then just twenty-one, shall receive and enjoy an income of some 15,000*l.* per annum so long—and only so long—as she shall remain unmarried. That if she do marry again, she shall receive absolutely nothing—the entire estate of the deceased passing to two distant relatives, believed to be living in obscure poverty in London.

Now comes the most curious part of the story.

A good many men besides old Wybrowe went mad about la belle Hélène out in Brazil; notably a man who was thought to be nearly as big a Croesus—a half-Spaniard, half-Englishman, by name Alvarez Smith. This hybrid was said to have the temper of a fiend, the face of a baboon, and the complexion of a jaundice-patient. The frantic vehemence with which, when at last he did speak, Smith pleaded his cause to her, nearly frightened Miss Chetwynd into hysterics: the malignant black scowl that twisted his ugly face till it grew absolutely awful in its hideousness, when she unconditionally declined his proposals, and shrank away from him, haunted her sleep for many a night afterwards.

Alvarez Smith went away and thought out his vengeance. This is how he took it, after waiting patiently for three years.

During old Wybrowe's lifetime he kept quiet, and made no sign. When the old man was dead, Smith broke in upon the widow, and, with full knowledge of the provisions of Wybrowe's will, renewed his former propositions. They were rejected again—this time with the addition of certain words that Helen Wybrowe would have been more prudent not to have spoken to such a man.

The same steamer which brought the widow home to England had among its passengers Alvarez Smith. He never once spoke to her, or molested her in any way during the voyage; but his hungry black eyes would rest upon her in a way that frightened her in spite of herself.

Those eyes watched her into the railway carriage at Southampton; met hers as she got out on to the platform at Waterloo; and, again, as the doors of her sister's house in Park Lane closed upon her. Every time she went abroad she met them; sleeping and waking, Alvarez Smith haunted her. It was intolerable; but what could she do? She left town; he followed her. She shut herself up in the house for days; and the first person she saw, when, by day or by night, she came out again was—Smith; always Alvarez Smith. Mrs. Wybrowe grew nervous and ill under this implacable persecution, which it was impossible to put an end to. And the worst of it was that she felt her persecutor was gaining a certain power over her; that those terrible eyes of his fascinated her like a basilisk's. She never avowed this feeling to Lady Oswestry, her sister, but she couldn't help confessing it to herself.

In a few weeks after her arrival in London, old Wybrowe's lawyer communicated to her the following startling intelligence. A person had bought up the reversionary interest of her husband's two distant relatives in the income that had been left her, subject to her remaining unmarried. Wybrowe's kinsmen, too poor to be troubled with many scruples, and considering that it was barely likely a woman would give up 15,000*l.* a year when she could keep it on such easy terms, had greedily accepted the offer that had been made them; and accordingly executed the necessary legal documents; had received a stipulated sum down; and had emigrated to Australia.

The person who had thus bought them out was, consequently, the person who would claim the heavy forfeit from Helen Wybrowe in the event of her marrying again. And

it was hardly needful to tell her that person's name. She guessed it instinctively—Alvarez Smith.

This, then, was her position: she must either, at one-and-twenty, condemn herself to a life-long widowhood, or relinquish a magnificent income to the man she detested. True, a court of law *might*, as her lawyer told her, set the will aside; but how could a woman petition such a court? Her woman's delicacy, at all events, rendered that out of the question in her case. Again, there might be men who would think (and who could afford to think) lightly of marrying a beggar; and among them there might be one whom she could love. But, wise in her generation, Mrs. Wybrowe built no castles in the air of this sort. She accepted the situation *telle qu'elle était*; shut herself up no longer; went among her kind; encountered her basilisk with an impassible visage; and tortured her tormentor by an ingeniously arranged sequence of flirtations with passed masters of the art.

Such, in substance, was Charlie Twistleton's story, which, interspersed with his own comments, lasted all the way down to Fulham.

I felt curious—strangely eager—to see this woman; from all I had just heard about her, I fancied she must needs stand apart from her kind in some way. And I had had five years of penal servitude with apparently homogeneous London women; whose manners and customs, and ideas seemed, like their dresses, to be all cut out of the same piece, and fashioned on the same model. What would Helen Wybrowe be like? It was my pet name, too—Helen.

'See her?' I asked Twistleton when we had done koo-too to Mrs. Huntingdon, and got out on to the croquet-lawn. With his pebble stuck in his eye, Charlie was raking the groups round us—vainly, as it seemed.

'No!' he said, 'she ain't here. Let's go and draw the shrubberies.'

'Frank!' said Aunt Medusa's voice behind me, just as I was moving off; 'Frank, let me introduce you to Miss Boodle?'

Brought up short like this, there was nothing for it but to stop and turn.

I turned. There was Miss Boodle, a plump, goodnatured-looking girl, apparently very appropriately named. 'This is the person you will be good enough to marry, sir,' Lady Medusa's eyes said to me as I lifted my hat; and Miss Boodle blushed a little, and smiled a good deal, as though she quite understood, and rather liked it.

But I made up my mind—with wonderful celerity, considering the little practice I had had in performing the feat of late—that Miss Boodle should never call herself the Hon. Mrs. Francis Drasdyl, unless at least, Helen Wylbrowe should prove to be—

'Frank will take you to the lower lawn, Bella,' Aunt Medusa said, breaking in sharply upon me, and folding herself into a garden-chair as she spoke; 'I think the sets seem all made up here.'

And Bella and I moved away. I looked at her as I strolled down a gravel walk beside her.

No; it was impossible. That round face and figure would be simply Lambertesque in another ten years; in anticipation of which, probably, nature had beneficently provided Miss Boodle with, as it were, web-feet; and the hands matched the feet. No; it really could not be done, unless indeed—

'You play croquet, Mr. Drasdyl?' Miss Boodle asked. Not a bad voice; but, somehow, not the voice I (rather hard to satisfy in that particular) fancied could ever thrill me much.

'Do you?' I returned, prudently.

'Oh! I doat on it,' Miss Bella cried, with a healthy enthusiasm I couldn't but admire. She was a young woman from the country, and this was her first season. Her what I must call Boodledom was fresh upon her still; like the Kentish roses on her round, plump cheeks.

'Do you know,' she went on, 'I won the champion mallet at our club last year!'

'Did you?' I said, gravely; 'I'm so sorry, Miss Boodle.'

'Dear me, Mr. Drasdyl! Why?'

'Because I shan't dare offer myself as a partner to a champion. I'm a shocking muff at this sort of thing.'

'Never mind!' she returned, with charming *naïveté*. 'I'm going to play with Cousin Tom!'

I invoked a fervent blessing on that individual wherever he was.

'And Cousin Tom is a champion, too?'

'Oh! yes. He plays so well.' And Miss Boodle's eyes went roving about in every direction in search of her partner.

'There he is!' she cried at last, half bounding forward. There he was, unmistakably. A broad-shouldered, freckled-faced, orange-whiskered youth, perspiring with eagerness for the fray, must be Cousin Tom, of course.

'Mr. Claypool—Mr. Drasdyl,' said Miss Boodle, performing a most uncalled-for and absurd ceremony for my sole benefit apparently, the champion being totally unconscious of my existence, and intent only on getting to work with the shortest possible delay.

'You couldn't be in better hands, I see, Miss Boodle,' I said, as I lifted my hat to her, and lounged off. I kept away from the upper lawn, where Aunt Medusa was, and tursed into the river-walk, where a score or so of flirtations were progressing more or less satisfactorily, with a firmer resolve than ever that never, at any price, would I take Isabella Boodle to wife.

I strolled along without meeting any one I knew, and was just going to sit down under a tree in a secluded corner and perpetrate a weed, when the voice of some one, hidden yet by the turn in the path—the divinest woman's voice that ever fell on a man's ear out of Paradise, fell on mine.

My slow, languid pulse, that nothing ever quickened, quickened then. I stood still, drinking in the sound. Two women came round the bend, towards me. One I knew—Lady Oswestry. The other I fancied I had seen before—in my dreams.

They were talking so earnestly

that neither saw me till they were quite close. Then Lady Oswestry looked up. 'Ah! Mr. Drasdy!' And we exchanged hand-pressures and commonplace. Then she said, deliciously—

'Let me introduce you to my sister—Mrs. Wybrowe. Helen, Mr. Drasdy.'

Mrs. Wybrowe's heavy violet eyes turned, slowly, full upon me; and I stood face to face with my Fate.

III.

I knew it, in that moment when our eyes met. I knew that I, Francis Drasdy, world-worn, case-hardened, pococorante cynic of seven-and-twenty, was to love this woman; that I did love her already.

Rather tall, graceful as Diana in her statuesque summer draperies, a

'Helen of the low-arch'd brow,
And amber hair, and dewy violet eyes;'

a woman with a child's face, stamped before its time with the mark of passion or of pain, a little thinner and a little paler than it should have been, perhaps, but with all the stronger, subtler, attraction for me that it was so—this was Mrs. Wybrowe, as I saw her that day.

Sitting alone, in early wintry gloamings, over my solitary fire in Bruton Street, I had seen her, or one like her, in the dreams, begotten half of soul-weariness half of cavendish, which the hardest of us dream now and then—the woman I could love, the woman who should love me as I would be loved. Now I saw her face to face, my dream incarnate, the Fate I had longed for and yet dreaded. There she was, at last.

My Fate was speaking to me—half a dozen words—of-course; and I was drawling commonplace in answer; and then we were all three strolling on—I beside her.

If I had been blind I should have loved her for her voice—her voice that, with its weird, thrilling, ineffable sweetness, sent the blood with a long-forgotten shiver through my veins as I listened to it.

True, it spake only of the weather, and the De Muraka, and the Season, and the last *cancan* about the latest Favourite, and other things in general. Set to such music, what did I care about the words?

Side by side with my Fate, oblivious of Aunt Medusa and Miss Boodle, I lounged down that pleasant, shady walk, enunciating decorous *vétillies* with languid voice and impassible mien; the same man, and yet how different from the man whom Lady Medusa and Kate Tyrrell had found in Bruton Street that morning.

For I loved this Helen Wybrowe, this woman with a strange history, whom I had known barely five minutes, as I had never loved woman before, as I never should again.

It was sudden enough, and absurd enough, in me, this *belle passion* that I felt. All the more reason for hiding it jealously.

We of this day, who make a science of *sang froid*, and, Sybarites though we be, shrink from ridicule—the ridicule of the fools we despise—as we never shrink from death—we learn to wear our mask easily enough, after a while. It was not till many a long day after that Helen Wybrowe really knew how it had been with me on the day we first met.

Down the pleasant shady walk, with the spell of her presence upon me, and the thrilling low music of her voice in my ear.

Presently we came to a little rond-point, where, under a big tree, there was a provision of garden-chairs. 'Shall we rest a little, Amy?' Mrs. Wybrowe said; 'it's too hot to keep walking.'

So we all three sat down under the big beech.

'You know Miss Boodle?' Lady Oswestry asked; 'I saw you playing cavalier *servente* on the croquet-lawn just now.'

'Of course one knows an heiress,' I responded, feeling pretty certain that Bella came under that denomination.

'Name, age, and what weight she carries,' murmured Helen; 'just as one knows all about the entries for the Grand Military.'

'Just so,' I returned; 'only not always so correctly. Wish one did. A "mistake" about *dot* is a much more serious business than standing a cracker on the wrong horse, you know.'

I thought if she wanted to talk stable I might as well help her; but she had turned her head a little, and was looking with dreamy eyes away from me.

Lady Oswestry took up the running.

'There's no "mistake" about Miss Boodle, I should think. Sir Boodle Boodle, you know—Kent people. He made a fortune by the new railway; and she's an only child, and there's no entail. Yes, Bella Boodle is decidedly a prizematch, Mr. Drasdy!'

'She *will* be, in a year or two,' I said, thinking of the Lambertesque symptoms I had noted in the damsel half an hour ago.

'Ah! you mean when her mother dies?' Lady Oswestry cried, agreeably misunderstanding me. 'Yes; she will probably have the Oxenham property too; I had forgotten that. But—two years? Lady Boodle is frightfully apoplectic, I *know*; Sir Savile Rowe told me so himself. I don't think it will be as long as that.'

'Don't you, really?' I sneered, gravely—not at her, but at myself—'don't you, really? That's important, Lady Oswestry.'

Helen's heavy violet eyes turned slowly back to my face again as I spoke. I hardened my heart, and met them tranquilly.

'And Sir Savile Rowe told you? Dear me! I went on.'

'Yes,' Lady Oswestry nodded; 'this is *entre nous*, of course. However, I've no doubt Lady Medusa knows all about it; she and Lady Boodle are rather *idea*. By the way, what have you done with Bella?'

'What a question! As if I were her keeper.'

'Pourquoi pas?' Lady Oswestry was notorious for a certain match-making hobby, and was taking a canter on it just at present. 'Pourquoi pas? She is very nice—letting alone her heiress-ship. And—'

A gesture, which, being inter-

preted, meant, 'And you are nothing but a Detrimental—a pensioner of Aunt Medusa's, you know!' finished the sentence eloquently.

'And her passion for—' I was going on.

'Oh! *that's* quite out of the question!' Lady Oswestry interrupted, eagerly, whipping up her hobby: 'they will never allow that, never. Sir Boodle has a perfect horror of—'

'Of what? Croquet?'

'Croquet? How absurd! No; of cousins!'

'Has he?' I was getting rather mystified. 'Why?'

'He says they've no business to marry; at least, not *first* cousins, as they are.'

'Who are?'

'Bella and that young Claypool.'

'Oh! Cousin Tom?'

'Yes, Cousin Tom. No; *that* will never come to anything.'

'I should hope not,' I muttered, piously; 'but I didn't mean that, Lady Oswestry. It was Miss Boodle's passion for croquet that I was thinking of.'

'Dear me,' said Lady Oswestry, self-upbraidingly, 'how very ridiculous! I thought, of course, you knew—'

'I know nothing about it—about this *tendresse* for Cousin Tom.'

'Well, it doesn't matter: it's all nonsense, you know.'

'But I *don't* know. I might think so perhaps if I hadn't seen him; but I did, just now. And after what I saw, *why*—'

'Allons, *demo!*' she laughed. 'It's too bad of you to sneer at him. You know perfectly well—. Ah!' she broke off, suddenly, 'there's Gordon Murray! The very man I've been wanting to see all day.'

And Lady Oswestry made signals with her parasol to an individual in the distance, who perseveringly declined to see them.

'How stupid he is!' she cried, at last, provoked; 'he's actually moving away. I must catch him. I'll be back in a moment, Helen.'

And, heedless of my (not very strongly urged) offer to bring the recalcitrant Murray to her presence, Lady Oswestry set off in immediate

pursuit, turned a corner, and disappeared.

I don't remember what Helen and I talked about when we were left alone, or how long we sat under the big beech.

I know she spoke, and that every now and then the great violet eyes turned slowly upon me; and, when she was silent,

‘Filled with light
The interval of sound.’

Bref, I was in Elysium, and lost the count of time. A step, soft and cat-like, that neither of us heard, came down the walk. A dry branch cracked under the cautious tread, and then we both looked up. A man passed us. I knew him instinctively. The fierce black eyes, contracted in their wrath, which met mine in one brief, vindictive glare could only belong to one man.

That lithe, dark personage with the feline tread, and the ugly yellow physiognomy, must needs be the hero of Charlie Twistleton's story, the man who had bought up the arbitrament of Helen Wybrowe's fate—Alvarez Smith.

He never looked at her this time, only at me. I wonder whether the man's instinct told him, even then, that I loved her?

He went slowly by. I am not the least given to superstition, and even cavendish hasn't told much yet on my naturally strong nerves; but I perfectly understood, in that moment, the Italian theory of the *mal' occhia*, and the balmy summer air seemed purer when my enemy passed out of my sight.

For I felt that Alvarez Smith and I were foes, and mortal foes, from that hour; that a duel—it might be a duel to the death—had commenced between us. You laugh at this, perhaps, who read it, tranquilly sceptical of anything in the shape of melodrama in this age of realism.

Reading it, too, I might do the same; but, that day, I had heard and seen sufficient of Helen Wybrowe's rejected pretendant to be convinced that this was as absolutely a fact as that I drew breath.

Mrs. Wybrowe rose a little pale; the dark circle under her eyes more

plainly visible; a sort of *hunted* look upon her face that made my pulse throb angrily.

‘Amy seems to have forgotten me,’ she said; ‘let us go and look for her.’

We walked across the croquet-lawn, for a while silently.

Then she said, ‘You know that man who passed us just now?’

‘I know him *now*,’ I answered; ‘I never saw him before, and only heard of his existence two hours ago.’

Her pale cheek flushed painfully.

‘Then you have heard—?’

‘Everything,’ I answered, stopping her. ‘There is Lady Oswestry yonder.’

So there was, with the unhappy Gordon Murray and Aunt Medusa.

Mrs. Wybrowe quickened her pace and said nothing more till she was safe under Amy Oswestry's wing again. Then a knot of men gathered round her, and Aunt Medusa bore down upon me and carried me away captive.

‘Where is Bella, Frank?’ she said.

‘Eating strawberries and iced cream over there,’ I answered, nodding towards the tent where the croquet-players were refreshing.

‘Ah! and what do you think about her?’

‘How can I think about her?’

And in truth it did seem preposterous. Fancy a human intellect occupying itself about Bella Boodle!

Aunt Medusa hadn't the faintest notion of what I meant.

‘She will be just the girl for—’ she began.

‘For Cousin Tom,’ I interrupted.

‘Yes; the two champions will pair admirably. She'll be Mrs. Thomas Claypool before the croquet season is over.’

I was longing to get back to that group round Mrs. Wybrowe from which Lady Medusa was bearing me away; and I dare say something of the impatience I felt manifested itself through the elaborate languor of my tone; and so my captor on a sudden conceived a wildly-vague notion that I was half inclined to be envious of Cousin Tom.

‘There's no fear of that,’ she said.

‘You must go down to Kent for the September shooting. Lady Boodle

will send you a special invitation. I knew you would like Bella. And now take me to get an ice.'

She was positively hugging herself in the success of her little game!

I let her continue that exercise to her heart's content without any further attempt to demonstrate to her that it was by no means called for, and took her away, as I was bid, to get an ice.

She ate three large ones. Then Lady Boodle came up, and glared apoplectically at me through her double eyeglass when I was presented to her. Then she ate ices, which I had to fetch for her. When they had both tried their digestion sufficiently in this way, the two dowagers went off together to another tent to have five o'clock tea, and I was set at liberty.

The croquet-lawn was nearly deserted when I crossed it. Valse-music floating out into the still, sultry air through the open French windows of Mrs. Huntingdon's drawing-room explained this phenomenon. Near the doorway, with a fresh knot of men about her, stood Mrs. Wybrowe. Just as I entered, some man asked her for the valse they had just commenced. It was Gordon Murray, an admirable performer. I was near enough to hear her refusal; but, making as though I heard it not, proffered a similar request the next moment.

The same refusal was on her lips, when the angry blood rushed swiftly into her face; she bowed her head silently, and put her hand upon my arm. As I turned, I saw Alvarez Smith watching us. The next moment my arm was close about her and we were swinging round the valse circle. I quite understood to what I owed that valse: she had read a threat in her persecutor's eyes, and had rebelled against it.

Swiftly and smoothly, perfectly together in a flying Viennese step, we had taken a couple of turns before either of us had spoken a word. As we passed the place where I had seen Alvarez Smith standing the second time, her hand closed suddenly on mine, and I felt her shiver in my arms.

'You are tired. Shall we stop?'

'No, no!' she murmured. 'Don't stop. Keep on.'

And we kept on, till the 'Soldaten-lieder' came to an end.

'That fellow annoys you,' I said, as we whirled by him again. 'I believe he has the evil eye myself.'

'Don't talk of him!' And again I felt her shiver.

'If you bid me not—no. But it is intolerable, you know. And quite preventible. Why should you permit—'

'Hush!' And as she spoke she lifted her eyes, in that slow, languid fashion she had, up to mine.

'Hush! Don't let us speak or think of him now.'

There is something stronger than ice-water in the veins even of a cynic of seven-and-twenty, after all. A fire shot through mine at her delicious emphasis of the 'now.' Her head drooped towards my shoulder again, and she seemed to nestle like a tired bird in my arms, that, involuntarily, closed about her closer.

'What a valse this is!' she said, presently. 'I think no one has my step like you.'

'You will trust yourself to me again, then?'

'If you choose.'

No need to answer; we must have been sufficiently *en rapport* for her to read my thoughts easily enough. The valse ended, we went away into the conservatory to sit out the square dance that followed. We sat out a good many there.

The evil eye lit on us once or twice. I think we were both too happy to trouble ourselves much about that.

'Only this dance, Amy,' Mrs. Wybrowe said, presently, when Lady Oswestry had unearthed us, and was proposing departure. And we had 'only that dance.'

I was wrapping her cloak about her in the hall.

'That rose will be dead before you get to Park Lane, Mrs. Wybrowe,' I said. 'Will you give it me to mark to-day with?'

It was the white rose she wore in her bosom that I asked for. She gave it me without a word. Then Lady Oswestry swept by us on some

man's arm to the carriage; we followed.

I held her hand in long, close farewell clasp; then the carriage-door was shut upon her; and Alvarez Smith and I were standing side by side on the gravel, watching her drive away.

IV.

The Season was over; London emptying fast; duns pressing; the heat intolerable. Howbeit I abode still in the Sahara of Bruton Street. Aunt Medusa had gone down into Kent with the Boodles, having extracted from me a promise to come down for the September shooting—a promise I only intended to keep if—

The 'if' was in Park Lane. Lady Oswestry had not yet made her move, hesitating between Buxton and Lindenbad; and I was watching the turn of the scale. For with Lady Oswestry would go Helen Wybrowe. And where Helen Wybrowe went I meant to follow. I had not spoken yet, though nearly a month had passed since that day at Fulham I had marked with a white rose. She had hardly given me a chance. And yet she knew, who knew me as I was, that I loved her—had loved her from the very moment our eyes met for the first time. And I knew my strange, wilful, passionate darling—my Helen, who was like no other—I knew she loved me with the one love of her life. Only between her loving me and my winning her there was much. Nevertheless the mask we both wore, before each other as before others, was getting too stifling to be worn much longer. It fell from both of us at last.

I had been sitting with her in Lady Oswestry's morning-room, under the shelter of the surzhades, among the flowers, one day for nearly an hour. My lady was heaven knows where; and we had been alone all the time. Common-places had languished, and died. There had been a silence, which those heavy violet eyes filled divinely enough, but which both of us knew must be broken; and only in one way.

I looked up into her face. In its passion-pallor, in the trembling lip, in the scarce-restrained tears that had gathered slowly to the eyes, I read what made me take her swiftly in my arms; and then the silence was broken by the sweet sound of her own name. 'Helen!'

She shivered, as she had shivered in that valse, only, this time, not with fear. And her head, with its diadem of amber hair, sank down upon my breast; and I bent mine till my lips touched hers, and clung to them. I had won her! Not yet.

The next moment she had freed herself.

'Oh! why have you done this?' she sobbed—wailed almost.

'Why? Because I love you, Helen. Because you love me. And because you and I know this is so.'

'Yes,' she murmured; 'yes; you love me. I know that. I knew it that day at Fulham. As no one ever has loved—ever will love me. I know that.'

'And you love me, Helen. You know that, too.'

'Yes; I love you!' she cried, passionately. 'I know that, too.'

'And yet you ask me—' I began, so far off my head as to be going to argue with her.

'Because this should never have been. All between us must end here, and now.'

'In heaven's name, why?' I broke in, rather mad with this piece of feminine cruelty. 'Why must it?'

'Frank,' she said, coolly now, 'Frank, this is folly. You know my story. You cannot marry a beggar as I shall be.'

'Nor you, à ce qu'il paraît.'

'Selfish and cruel!'

Even at that moment I couldn't but admire that truly feminine retort.

She went on.

'I? Am I thinking of myself? And yet this is my fault. I knew what has happened must happen. Yes; it is I who have been selfish. I knew it; and I ought—. But—oh! Frank, I knew you loved me; and my loveless life seemed so bitter—so bitter! And—'

And here she broke down, sobbing.

My wilful, passionate darling! She was trying to persuade herself that she was acting nobly and disinterestedly; and, being noways fitted for such self-martyrdom, was failing signally. She ought to have nipped this love of mine sharply in the bud, but lacked the will. And now she was trying to sacrifice it, and her own love, on the shrine of duty—now when she was my own, when she had rested her head upon my breast, when she had given her lips to mine.

Now, she had decided that I must not marry a beggar. And, she being inclined to martyrise herself, I must needs be selfish and cruel if I objected to share her crown. *Ma foi!* They think, these women, there is no such great difference, after all, between the sunlight and the moonlight, the water and the wine, our passions and theirs. If they can crucify a love, why not we?

And so my Helen—who was, indeed, my very own—told me I was not to marry a beggar; told me, that, for my sake, our love-story was to end here—in short, told me all a woman tells a man in like case.

But she told me, too, by every word and look, unwittingly but unmistakably, that I should be a triple fool if I lost her now—this be-all and end-all of my life; this woman who would make my life worth the living. I didn't repeat my folly of attempting to argue with her. Her hand was strong enough against me as it was without such strengthening. I didn't take her in my arms again, and stifle her feeble special-pleading with kisses. I let her say her say. And then, when she had sunk back into the low deep fauteuil weak, and trembling, and defenceless again, I knelt beside her; and, holding fast in mine the little soft hand I never meant to let go, I told her how it must needs fare with me if she had her way. And I was conquering what I knew all along was my own of right; the violet eyes were full of happy tears; the words I looked to hear already trembling on the full lips that had grown meek again, when—there was a rustle of woman's draperies; and, through the *châs'oscuro* of the room,

Lady Oswestry bore down upon us.

And Helen rose; and, before I could stay her, had fled away swiftly upon her feet; leaving me to face my lady alone.

The which I did as best I might. For a while Lady Oswestry looked grave and judicial; then, by degrees, benignant but mildly reproachful; when I took my leave, protective and honestly propitious. It was arranged between us that I should come to Park Lane early the next day.

At a frightfully undue hour I drove there. A hansom had just pulled up at the door; the late occupant was speaking to the groom of the chambers in the hall. I was just in time to hear the functionary's answer to the question put to him.

'No, sir. My lady and Mrs. Wybrowe left town for the Continent last evening.'

The other swung round on his heel with a fierce '*carajo!*' and again I stood face to face with Alvarez Smith, the man with the evil eye.

v.

That night, some twenty minutes past eight of the clock, my hansom, turning the Bruton Street corner at a sharp trot, was nearly out over by another hansom charging furiously down Bond Street.

The two drivers exchanged a broadside of double-shotted blasphemies, flogged their horses clear of each other, and started again, the offending Jehu leading.

I was bound for Charing Cross, en route to Dover, Paris, and Lindenbad, in the track of Lady Oswestry and Helen Wybrowe; and, in consequence of this delay, only saved the 8.30 mail-train by about two seconds. Another man, however, ran it closer still. A man in a fur-lined travelling-robe, and a peaked cap pulled over his eyes, took a through ticket to Lindenbad after me, and followed me on to the platform, half a dozen yards behind.

I heard him hurrying after me; just as the guard had opened the door of an empty carriage, he

caught me up and got in too. The door was slammed; the whistle shrieked, and the Dover Mail started.

I had dropped into one corner; my companion rolled himself into the opposite one. I lit a cigar; so did he; and we had cleared London, and had run a dozen miles down the line before I looked at him again. I was thinking what Helen's sudden departure boded me; whether I was so sure of winning her, after all; and, deep in speculations of this sort, I had no eyes or thoughts for anything else.

Besides, that shapeless travelling-robe, and that peaked cap that kept his face in an impenetrable shadow, would have puzzled me, even if I had had a suspicion as to who the man in the opposite corner was. And in the preparations for my sudden departure I had forgotten all about him.

So that it was not till he tore off his cap and flung aside his wrapper that I knew that Alvarez Smith and I were alone together in that carriage of the Dover mail-train; and that he was glaring at me with all the furious hate he felt for me in his evil eyes.

I looked at him tranquilly enough, I think; but I couldn't help feeling that the rencontre was by no means an agreeable one; that the Express stopped nowhere between London and Dover; and that Alvarez Smith was probably as mad as any inmate of Hanwell.

However, I am not easily put off head, and, as I say, returned his glare with a tranquil stare, and went on smoking.

Whether he had expected his melodrama to produce more effect, and was disappointed; whether my calmness irritated him afresh, I don't know. Certain it is that he rose and came towards me with an oath.

It struck me forcibly that he was dangerous; and I gradually slipped my hand into the inner breast-pocket of my travelling-jacket, and unfastened the loop which kept a useful little revolver de poche steady there.

There seemed likely to be a neces-

sity, disagreeable but imperative, for shooting this man before we got to Dover. And it so happened that I felt in no humour to run any risk by the exercise of an unwise forbearance towards a mad brute like this, if it came to a fight.

It appeared, though, that he had something to say before he began; for he seated himself again exactly opposite to me, and muttered hoarsely:

'So, we are alone at last; you and I.'

'So it seems,' I returned. I saw that, if he meant to have a row, he didn't feel quite up to the mark yet, and wanted to talk himself into the necessary fury; so I thought I might venture to light another cigar; which I did, loosing my grip of the pistol-butt for a moment, but keeping an eye on my man the while.

He actually gnashed his yellow teeth at me. He looked so unutterably hideous, and at the same time so intensely ludicrous, while he was doing it, that I laughed.

'Take care!' he screamed, shivering with wrath. 'You laugh now! let him laugh that wins! *Caramba* you have not won yet.'

'No?' I inquired, insolently.

'No! curse you! you never shall.'

'Bah! who says so, my good man?'

'I! I have sworn it!'

'You?' I sneered, rather enjoying his fury, and with no mind to spare him any stab I could give him. 'You? You are madder than I thought you were.'

'You shall never have her! *Madre de Dios!* never!

'You're wrong. I shall.'

He smiled in a ghastly fashion with his white, dry lips.

'No,' he said; and if his tone was calmer, it was twice as 'dangerous' and threatening now. 'No; I shall keep my oath—be sure of that. Listen!' he went on, after a pause, and with that same forced calmness; 'from the day I saw her first, and each day more and more, I have loved her—this woman, who—'

'Who, from that same day, and

each day more and more, has loathed and hated you,' I struck in. 'Well?'

By the light of the lamp above us I could see his yellow face turn the ashen hue of a dead man's, as that cruel taunt of mine hit home.

He covered his face with his hands, and uttered a faint, dull moan, as though he had, in very deed, got his death-hurt.

Yes; and through those quivering fingers of his, tears, that must have been wrung from him like drops of blood in his agony, forced themselves slowly, one by one. He sat there, rocking himself to and fro, saying no word for a while, but making that low moan more than once.

Thinking this matter over since, I have learnt to pity this man. Thinking of my darling's worn face, and the hunted look he had brought there so often, I was pitiless enough then.

I smoked on, watching him. The Express rushed through the falling darkness; the stations flashed out one after another: we had run about half our distance.

Presently he spoke again, as though he had only just heard those last words of mine.

'Yes; she hates me—hates me, who would fling down my life,—lose my salvation for her!'

'I've no doubt. Unfortunately, neither sacrifice happens to be required. Have you anything else to observe?'

'She hates me,' he went on, as though he were talking to himself, and unheeding what I said: 'I could bear that, though it kills me. But to know another man can call her his—to know she loves this man! ah, no!'

I was beginning to get rather tired of the thing by this time, so I said—

'Don't you think we've had about enough of this? Quite, it seems to me. You've thrust yourself into a matter with which you have no earthly concern (beyond, of course, claiming your forfeit when Mrs. Wybrowe marries again—though whether a law-court will give it you, is, to say the least of it, doubtful), and, as you were rather

amusing, I listened to you; now, you bore me; let us drop the subject.'

'Not yet,' he said, with a strange sort of smile; 'you and I have something more to say to each other. Listen!—for I was going to interrupt him—'you will give me your word of honour never to see Helen Wybrowe again. It will be better, believe me.'

'Damn your insolence!' I said, fairly angry at this; 'what do you mean?'

'Remember, you can never marry her; I have sworn it.'

'Bah! You mean you can beggar her? Try it.'

'I mean,' he said, more calmly than he had spoken yet—'I mean that sooner than you should marry Helen Wybrowe I would kill you.'

'Try that, too, if you like.'

'But you will promise me what I ask? You must. See; we are alone, you and I. You are in my power: nothing can save you if—'

He paused here, leaning forward towards me, with his elbows resting on his knees, and his evil eyes looking into mine. I smiled when he said nothing could save me from him; for I had considerable faith in the miniature six-shooter my right hand was closing on while he spoke.

'I knew you would follow her,' he went on. 'I saw you to-night at the station; I was behind you when you took your ticket; and I got in here after you, knowing that the hour I had longed for had come at last—when you and I should be alone, with none to stand between us; when you should swear to me never to see her face again; or when I should have your life.'

He ground the last three words out between his teeth with ferocious emphasis. The crisis was evidently approaching; the madman could hardly contain himself much longer. In another minute he might be at my throat; and then, disagreeable as it would be, I should inevitably have to shoot him. Alvarez Smith was by no means the sort of person to stand on much ceremony with when the instincts he inherited from that Spanish Creole of a mother of his were in the ascendant; and it

was his life or mine, I began to think. I drew the revolver quietly out of my pocket, and covered him from my knee in anticipation of his rush.

'Now,' he hissed, 'will you promise what I ask?'

'I'll see you in Gehenna first!'

'You will not?'

'Confound you, no! But I'll promise you this,' I added, as I saw him crouching like a jaguar for his spring at my throat, 'that, madman or no madman, if you lay a finger on me, I'll shoot you in your tracks without further warning.'

Raising my right hand quickly, I covered him fairly, now. My amiable companion dropped back into his seat with a hideous Spanish blasphemy; most unexpectedly baffled and beaten.

'That's right,' I said, considerably relieved to find he was not so mad as to have lost all fear for himself, and put me under the painful necessity of winging him; 'of course you didn't expect me to be so well able to take care of myself; and I suppose you've only a knife. I don't much think you'll kill me to-night, after all, though we are alone, &c., as you were good enough to remind me just now.'

'Oh!' he snarled, 'I shall kill you yet!'

'I differ with you there. My own impression is that you'll be in Hanwell or Charenton before long. Meanwhile, let me advise you not to try this again. If you do, remember, I've warned you.'

He flung a curse at me, and, turning away, rolled himself up in his cloak, and never moved again till the Mail ran into the Dover Station. Then he rose suddenly, opened the door, sprang on to the platform, and disappeared.

I had no time, then, to trouble about him. The train moved on to the pier, where the Calais packet lay. When I got on board I looked about carefully for my would-be assassin, intending, if I found him, to drop a hint to the first sergent-de-ville I came across on the other side. But Alvarez Smith didn't cross in the 'Sapphire' that night, I fancy. At least, his yellow face

was nowhere to be seen among the crowd at Calais, or at the Nord Station in Paris next morning. And I reached the 'Russie' at Lindenbad without encountering it.

VI.

'And so you ran away from me, Helen?'

It was some three or four hours after my arrival in Lindenbad. I had forced the consigne, carried Lady Oswestry's rooms in the 'Russie' by storm, utterly discomfiting the garrison by the suddenness and vigour of my assault, inasmuch that after a brief, hopeless struggle, it surrendered at discretion. My darling had spoken the words that bound her life to mine for ever. Under the summer stars, in the hush of the summer night, she and I were sitting on the balcony of their room that overlooked the river and the purple woods beyond; I at her feet, as I loved best to sit, and watch the great violet eyes turn slowly on me; at her feet, with her hand in mine again.

'And so you ran away from me, Helen?'

'What else could I do? I was so weak with you, Frank; so weak against my love. And, for your sake, I felt it ought not to be. So I ran away. It was terrible work to get Amy to start that night, though! She was horribly cruel to me: she fought for you. How I loved her when she did! But I would go; and so we went.'

'And then you thought you were safe?'

'Safer. Away from you, I was strong.'

'And did you think you would be out of my reach long?'

She gave me a smile, delicious as a caress. Then she said:

'Qui sait? I thought you would come, but not so soon. Not till I should have had time to harden my heart. I knew I was doing right, Frank. But I thought, too, that I might never see you again. And then—'

Her face told me the rest.

'Enfant! What had you to do with right or wrong if you loved

me? You were mine. How could you ever think I should let you go? Let you go, who have given me new faith, new hope, new life—made life precious to me, now—how could I? Helen, my Helen, nothing can take you from me now. You cannot take yourself from me.'

From my arms, where she had nestled, on a sudden she started.

'There!' she whispered, pointing to the deserted river-walk; 'there! Did you not see him?'

On her face, yet wet with happy tears, had come the hunted look once more; in her voice was the old fear, though my arms and my love were about her. I knew what had done this; the sight of a man for whom I was beginning to feel something of the hate that kills.

'Did you not see him?' she whispered again, shuddering even in my clasp.

'Whom?'

I knew what she would say before she said it.

'No,' I answered; 'I saw no one. Are you sure you recognized him?'

'Sure?' she repeated; 'I saw him plainly. He stood full in the moonlight against the background of the trees in the *allée*. And he lifted his hand as though it held a knife. It was a threat. Frank, that man would kill you.'

'Bah!'

'You don't know him.'

It struck me rather forcibly that I did.

'I tell you he would kill you.'

'Well, I dare say he would, if I let him. But life has grown too dear to me this last hour or two for me to let a madman rob me of it very easily. I shall take care of myself, *mon enfant*. Besides, I fancy you must be mistaken.'

'Impossible, I tell you.'

'I saw no one, you know. And if Alvarez Smith wants to do me a mischief, why on earth should he turn out and do melodrama in the moonlight—threaten with imaginary daggers, and that sort of thing—to put me on my guard?'

'I saw him standing there,' and she pointed, again, straight before her.

'And how was he dressed?'

'In a sort of cloak, it seemed. I saw him throw it back when he lifted his arm.'

'And then he disappeared—where?'

'In the shadow of the trees.'

That was perfectly possible. A couple of strides would take any one out of sight, who had stood even in the centre of the broad *allée*.

If Helen had really seen Alvarez Smith, he might be hidden in that shadow even now, watching us. My blood began to stir at this.

'Some perfectly inoffensive bourgeois, I should think,' I said, 'taking a pinch of snuff, or something of that sort. However, we'll see about Alvarez Smith in the morning. Lady Oswestry has woke up at last; we must come in, I suppose. Don't say anything to her about this notion of yours, mind.'

'Oh, Frank!' she murmured; 'take care. It was he I saw. And he hates you.'

'*Libre à lui!*' I responded, laughing. And then, on her lips, 'My darling, don't you think I shall take care for your sake, now? There! Sois tranquille, et dors sur les deux oreilles!' A piece of advice which I fancy Mrs. Wybrowe hardly followed as she ought to have done.

Whether it was Alvarez Smith whom she had seen, or not, and what that individual's presence in Lindenbad meant, I did not waste much time, as I sat smoking far into the dawn of the coming day at my open window, in considering. After my own experience of him I felt that he was not altogether unlikely to keep his word, and put a knife into me in the dark if he got the chance; but it was just that chance I did not mean him to get. I made up my mind to have five minutes' conversation with the Lindenbad Polizei-Commissir next morning, and then fell a-thinking of more pressing matters than Alvarez Smith—of the woman I had won, and the future that was before us both; of Aunt Medusa sleeping peacefully in her catafalque at Boodle Park, and dreaming of my marriage with Bella; and of how Aunt Medusa might take *this* match;

of my own entanglements of all sorts, and how they were to be got out of.

And satisfying myself over my last pipe that things would probably go pretty straight, I went to bed about the time the sun had risen, and dreamed of Helen till Ward, who had followed me with the heavy baggage, came in just as he was wont to do in Bruton Street with coffee, and my bath-water.

I had my five minutes' conversation with the Commissar before I went to knife-and-fork breakfast at Lady Oswestry's. No one answering to my description of Alvarez Smith was known to have arrived in Lindenbad at present; but inquiries should be set on foot, and the individual in question kept under proper surveillance, the urbane official assured me.

I greatly, though not altogether, relieved Helen's anxiety on my account by a report of my interview with Herr Kraftenberg. She was still positive that the man she had seen in the moonlight was Alvarez Smith. Two or three days passed by, however, and the man in the cloak who flourished imaginary daggers was neither seen nor heard of further by us. The Polizei-Amt had nothing to tell me about any such person, and Mrs. Wybrowe would at times half admit that she might have been mistaken after all. And then she and I had so much else to think of that she soon learned to banish her misgivings almost entirely.

It seemed, though, she had reason for them. I had been just a week in the Bad when the *dénouement* of this story came about.

We had gone up the river one morning in a 'hen-coop,' had landed some three miles or so above Lindenbad, and strolled away, out of sight of the boatmen, along the bank, down to which extended the low scrub and brushwood of the forest.

We had sat down on a sort of little crag which overhung the river, and from which Helen had discovered a view which she was doing her best to sketch under an organized series of interruptions from me.

Lying there at her feet, watching her eyes, and drinking in her voice, thinking of that new life she had given me, and that was precious to me for her sake, I was terribly near my death.

There was hardly a breath of air astir; and yet, all at once, my pot-hat, that was tilted over my eyes to keep off the sun-glare, rolled away lazily across the turf, flipped, so neatly and lightly that I hardly felt it, off my head.

A sharp crack and a little puff of white smoke rising above a clump of brushwood explained this phenomenon.

I saw at once what this meant. I was on my feet, and half way across to the cover which sheltered my would-be assassin in a couple of bounds. Another bullet whizzed by my ear, and then I had sprung into the thicket, struck, by one lucky blow, a smoking revolver from the shaking hands, and flown at the throat of—Alvarez Smith.

It was as well I had lost no time: he got no chance of using his knife.

I heard Helen scream, and then saw her fall lifeless on the turf where we had been sitting, and then I was wrestling for dear life with a madman. He had no science, but he held me like a fiend. I cut him off his legs again and again; but he clung so desperately to me that I couldn't drop him. Each fresh struggle brought us nearer and nearer the edge of the little crag. I guessed what he wanted to do, and put all my remaining strength into one fierce, desperate effort to fling him.

This time he went down, but my foot had slipped on the dry short turf, and he managed to pull me down upon him.

I felt his arms close round me in a grip of steel as he twisted and writhed towards the edge; I heard his yell of diabolical triumph in my ears; knew that we must roll over; felt the earth slip away from me; felt the mad rush of air by me; felt a shock that seemed to stun me; and then, locked in each other's arms, the water closed over us like a thick darkness.

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He must have struck against something in the fall, and have been dead or stunned when he reached the water.

In a second I had wrenched myself free from that deadly grip, had risen to the surface, and was striking out for the bank. Ten minutes more and I was kneeling beside Helen, slowly recovering her consciousness under the sympathizing care of a forest-keeper's wife.

* * * * *

The body of Alvarez Smith was

picked up next day. He had disguised himself so well, while waiting his opportunity to settle matters with me, as to have eluded detection by the Polizei-Amt, but I was able to swear unhesitatingly to his identity, and did, with some pardonable satisfaction.

He is believed to have left no one to exact the forfeit from Helen Wybrowe when she marries me; and, supposing his bargain with the original claimants to have been a lawful one, there is an end, you see, of 'Wybrowe's Will.'

LITTLE TEAS.

OF all modern inventions for the increase of the happiness of our social life I believe 'little teas' to be the greatest and best.

To 'little teas,' therefore, I shall treat my readers in the spirit of a partisan; for it is clear to me that civilization requires 'little teas,' and insists upon having them.

When our honoured great-grandmothers took their 'dish of tea,' it was 'little tea,' for they had it at five o'clock; and

Snuff, or the fan, supplied each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.'

But Pope liked a sly sting at the ladies, and so mixed up satire with truth that he ought to have been put upon weak tea for half a season at least, and made sometimes to miss the pretty smiles he had studied so well. Yet we should never have had the brilliant, charming poem from which we have quoted but for a 'little tea,' and for the introduction of coffee at that time I may give this poem's authority against such as proclaim it to be an innovation. It is no innovation. Have it by all means:—

'Coffee, which makes the politician wise,
And see through all things with his half-shut eyes.'

Besides, coffee is our elder friend, and takes precedence.

As dinners got later teas were postponed to unnatural periods. They were no longer 'little teas.'

They lost the charm that had belonged to five o'clock. Tea became a mere medicine to refresh the sufferer from a hot room; or a 'something to do' in that time after dinner when ladies were supposed to be dull, almost to extinction: but the dear poetic little tea, full of a life peculiarly its own, was no more.

By degrees this great human want was so universally felt that it had again to be attended to. Ladies got into the schoolrooms and nurseries for an hour of relaxation at the children's tea; into their chambers from the house-keeper's room ladies'-maids brought the dainty drink slyly to little gatherings of the gentler sex, who thus recruited themselves for the dinner campaign. But the necessity being once again in this manner recognized the next step was to make it into a social enjoyment; and then, finally, into the most excellent, harmless, delightful gaiety in the whole arrangement of social life—our modern little teas. So, leaving the days when

'Thou great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Did sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea,

let us come home to our own times, and our most intelligent selves, and, in our own interests, discuss our flourishing institution of 'Little tea.'

Like all flourishing things, it is liable to accidents from too much care, and too little care—it may be

overdone; be made to bear too heavy a burthen; be exhausted by unwise repetition; be overworked, —inf act, or, in a word, be made into something else, when, I need scarcely say, as a *little tea*, the failure is complete. But the little tea, just judiciously elaborated out of the usual domestic daily afternoon refreshment for the purpose of getting a fixed number of chosen friends to call at an hour when you have predetermined to be at home —that is as exquisite an idea as clever kindness ever conceived, and it ought to be worked out in a corresponding spirit.

One great recommendation of the 'little tea' institution is, that any one with sufficient genius to make their ever seeing company pardonable can give it.

But there are a few people who ought neither to give little teas nor go to them. They are of the class who when once seated in a chair cannot get up again. At a morning call they stay an hour; they cannot dismiss themselves. At a little tea they are obstructive, sitting still, and staying silent so pertinaciously that the most thoughtless and the gayest among the other guests begin to wonder if anything is the matter.

Such a person, if very well dressed, looks severe, satirical, critical to ill-nature, and expecting, to such an extent that we know instinctively that to please will be impossible, and lose courage accordingly. But if such a person is dressed in dull garments, what a dreadful protesting atmosphere appears to be gathered round her! She sits in cypress dimness, apparently from a causeless choice; her raiment looks penitential, and she makes one angry by seeming to have selected the occasion of our little tea for the performance of a personal mortification. It may be that this profoundly serious specimen of human nature is neither a criticising nor a mortified character—so much the better for her; appearances are, nevertheless, so entirely against her that she is disqualified, and should never get an invitation for 'little tea.'

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There are men, too, who are thoroughly, by nature, unfitted for this sublime enjoyment. They are the men who *will* perpetually be carrying cake, and offering to do this, that, and the other about the tea-tray; as if people really assembled together at five o'clock in the afternoon to eat and drink. If once a man has got it into his head that he is intended to be useful, put him out of the world of little teas; he is incurable. If he cannot *feel* the difference between the pleasant attentions of a gentleman and that 'waiting on the company' which the servant would do so much better, you cannot explain it to him. Ask him to dinner, but as to little tea, have done with him. Of course he does his unwelcome endeavours from the best of motives, and all for love; but

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs
What mighty contests rise from trivial things.

It is a law in the world of little teas that Belinda must not be bothered.

From this instance you will perceive that I am not writing of those afternoon receptions which are found to be very convenient in London, where people are so many, and distances so great. Let such be as grand, gorgeous, heavy, crowded, as suits the persons concerned. Pleasant nooks are to be found even in them where the real purposes of little teas are carried out, under difficulties, it is true, but yet *not* without success; and they are compensations to be grateful for. But the kind of little tea of which I am writing, whether in town or country, is not a great gathering for the combined purposes of being civil to the greatest possible number of people; of meeting a desired few in the solitude caused by the crowding of the many; of disguising a political interview; or of giving a really excellent concert. No! *my* little tea is the real, undisguised, pure, unadulterated Bohea; the thing that we can all of us give if we have the wit to choose our company, and that which we can all enjoy if we conscientiously bear in

mind the end for which we are assembled; and that end is, simply, the enjoyment of *relaxation*; a far more difficult thing to get than *rest*; for, to get that best medicine for body and mind, true relaxation, you must be both amused and consoled; you must get your enjoyment without fatigue and without unwholesome excitement; you must get gratification with the largest amount of ease and the least possible amount of labour. Therefore the 'little tea' is to be an elaboration of the daily home refreshment, which appeals to everybody's love of smooth ways, pleasant faces, seasons of rest, and the sunny thoughtlessness of leisure hours.

It follows, then, that to bring a well-considered party together for a *good* little tea is a thing by no means to be done without considerable care and thought. It may require no more power than we all of us possess, but then we really must rub up our endowments and use them for the good of our neighbours. I therefore beg leave to protest against certain things.

I protest against being received at the door by a servant who takes my wrappings, if such have been necessary; possesses himself of sticks, parasols, and such minor encumbrances, as if we were all going into a picture exhibition, and were not to be trusted with weapons of offence or mischief; hands me over to one or two trimly-dressed domestics of the female gender, who offer me rations of food with a gentle hint that I may sit in their presence if I please, or if, after my walk, I feel too tired to talk standing to victims as ill off as myself: this sort of thing has no flavour of home in it; it is all business; cruel, hardly-ordered, unrelenting business. All this may herald in a very well-ordered and agreeable party, but we are not going to be blessed by 'little tea.' I submit, sorrowing in my heart; for this is not, I say it again, 'little tea.' I want Belinda,

'As o'er the fragrant steam she bends her head,'

and I find—well, I enter the room,

and try to be grateful, but it is only 'Kettledrum,' after all.

Now, as to the giving of little teas, they are easiest given in the country, but they are most wanted in towns. If you combine both, and tempt out friends from a neighbouring town to your little tea in the country you do a great thing; and being thus favoured by circumstances and situation, your work is well begun, and to carry it out ought to be easy.

Your little tea should be such a triumph of seeming simplicity that every guest, at the highest point of gratification, should feel that it is all so easy they could do it themselves. This will be quite untrue; but a self-deception so agreeable and so flattering will prove that you have accomplished a perfect success. My advice upon it is—Keep your secret, and do it again! And I think it will be found that such successes are only made under certain conditions, about which any amount of variety may circulate, according to seasons, places, and people, but which themselves remain, always, fixed.

These following are some of them.

The rooms are airy, bright, not so full of furniture as to impede motion; for the ease of moving about must be in every one's power; and provided with a sufficiency of comfortable seats, and little moveable tables. People will group then, without trouble, and use one table between three or four for tea, books, talk, or any other entertainment. Little teas are thoroughly social gatherings.

Jean Paul exclaimed, with an exquisite pathos, 'How is each of us so lonely in the wide bosom of the all! Each encased as in his transparent ice palace, our brother is visible, but for ever unattainable.'

Now this description has a cry of despair in it; but there is also in it a truth that every reader must recognize. We find it everywhere: in the house, the city, the suburbs—'close by those meads for ever crowned with flowers'—in our walks, and by our own firesides, and—I must confess it—in the

world of ill-ordered little teas. But it is *because* they are ill-ordered. And if ever there was an assemblage to which Jean Paul's words are *not* applicable it is that which celebrates a perfect 'little tea.'

It is so desirable to have more rooms than one—if your party is large—that the hall should be pressed into the service, and, if necessary, the staircase closed up by high-growing flowers and little trees in pots. But never let any carpenter's work appear. All should wear the look of being no more than the family hands could accomplish. Any evidence of laborious preparation is contrary to the spirit of a little tea, and quite out of harmony with the idea; for you must remember that you are not going to exhibit yourselves either as people of taste, or hospitality, or cleverness, or—worst of all—of affluence. You may be all; in fact, I hope you are; but these facts must have no individuality given to them; they may be the assisting spirits, but there must be no consciousness of their existence: the one thing to be felt is, that you give perfect little teas with such a smooth fitting on of all surrounding circumstances that there is not a crevice for curiosity to pass through or to attract a questioning eye. I need not add, then, that though you may show a really kind courage in not shrinking from a little trouble, you will *never be ambitious*; simplicity is a characteristic of little tea.

A great point for consideration, on your way to perfection, is dress. The neatest and most elegant morning costume is the proper thing. You, who give the little tea, should be dressed, if in summer, in cool materials, as inexpensive as you please, but harmoniously arranged and perfectly well made. You are to stand the test of prolonged observation and daylight; and, moreover, you have invited criticism. Being in your own home, there must not be about you the faintest suspicion of being dressed in your best; and yet it must be plain to every guest that you have made yourself ready to receive them, and

put off, in compliment to them, your everyday apparel. The neat-handed daughters of a house, from the exquisitely dressed hair to the scrupulously fitted little foot, should be models of *home perfection*; for the colouring of women over these little teas forms a great and genuine attraction. It is that which specially distinguishes them; and we, the guests, are injured if we feel that those indescribable but inestimable hues are either wanting or dimmed.

Then your guests must be of many ages, and educated enough to have patience with, if not to enjoy, each other's pursuits. It is quite allowable to make little occasions for the display of different people's attainments; this has to be carefully done without speech-making, but with a gentle decision which gets over objections and debate; it is even *right* to arrange that every one who is going to do anything for the general entertainment shall do it under the *best* possible circumstances, so as to attract to *him- or her-self* immediate and freely-given praise.

Music is the most general of all the entertainments provided for little teas. But lamentably poor is this fare too often. Still I look on it as a necessity. Quietness may be necessary for *rest*; but for *relaxation* of body and mind there must be something going on. Perpetual talking is a perpetual call on your attention; but singing and playing give you a choice. You may, or you may not, listen; as long as the noise goes on you are free; and if this noise, as I venture to call it, is not absolutely painful, you are probably to some extent entertained. Anyhow, while it is going on you are freed from all responsibility; simply, nothing is, for the time, expected of you; and this alone is ease to many a too sensitive soul.

I have taken music, you see, on the very lowest ground; alas, that certain excruciating experiences and jarring recollections should have obliged me to do so! But why are not the singers of a family trained to sing expressly for the occasions of little teas? Why may not neigh-

bouring families meet to learn the many delightful trios and quartettes which are among the classic stores of our music shelves? With the necessary good ears, and with only moderate voices, excellent music may be got in this way, of a thoroughly popular sort, with no more difficulty than honest application would conquer.

It makes a very pleasant variety, too, if some of the performers have learnt to sing without any instrumental accompaniment. This, if well done—and it requires great care, expression, precision as to time and emphasis, and the frequent practice of the art till the habit is fixed and the sympathy between the singers perfected—is invariably successful. All givers of little teas should establish a small secret society for the attainment of this charming power, on which no amount of painstaking will be thrown away. It is not easy to do it well. It requires more than the ordinary knowledge of music, perhaps; and the power, gained by perseverance and good teaching, of using the voice as an instrument. It is a very improving study, for conscientious correctness is imperatively demanded when no assistance from an instrumental accompaniment covers the failures of the human voice.

But music should not be the one only amusement to wait on little tea. There should be provision made for other tastes and for long-formed habits. In some quiet corner chessplayers might be free from distractions; books and magazines may be at hand; and such prints as illustrate the interests of the day will offer topics for talk or excite a moment's laughter.

There should, however, be pauses, and people should move about—few things more completely deaden the life of an afternoon party than the eternal sitting in one place to which some of the excellent of the earth are addicted.

But if people are to move from their chairs there must be places to go to. These nooks and corners are easily made by a thoughtful arrangement of seats and sofas,

with reference to pleasant views from pretty windows, convenient tables, groups of flowers, and such like. And if you would have people stand up and feel free, you must never have a table in the middle of the room. It is to tempt people to move and change the scene that two rooms work better than one.

Then, at certain seasons, grapes and wall-fruit, or even strawberries and cream, in the spring, might be permitted an appearance; handed round, placed on the already-mentioned little tables, and followed by the finger-basin and damask napkin to every guest. Ices, also, might be introduced at discretion to make a break. But, above all things, these charming little teas ought not to be allowed to last too long. In the interests of society, and little teas, I say that an hour and a half is the longest time that they ought to occupy; and very right-minded people will not stay beyond an hour. I assure you that too much little tea is simply fatal.

To see our friends really, and with an honest meaning, *at home*, is so charming a recreation that those who have thoroughly enjoyed it would preserve the blessing in freshness and beauty, in health and vigour, at any amount of personal sacrifice in the direction of going early away.

I will now give a concluding caution.

At little tea never admit into the room pet birds in a cage—not even a dove; and certainly not any bird supposed to be capable of imitating the human voice. Dogs are to be kept at a distance, and neither seen nor heard; and—forgive me! forgive me, for I am right—*children*. I am a great lover of children, but little tea is bad for them.

Friends in old age, if they will grant us the benediction of their presence, are to be welcomed proudly; but individuals under fifteen?—No!

Run no risk of spoiling the pleasure of this hour of home enjoyment and real recreation.

** Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
And monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all! **

HER MAJESTY'S SALE BY AUCTION.

ONE Hundred and Seventy-Ninth Sale. Custom House, London. For Sale, by Order of the Honourable the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Customs, at the Commercial Sale Rooms, Mincing Lane, on —, the following goods, for exportation or home consumption—Beer, Brandy, Candles, Coffee, Cutlery, Eau de Cologne, Flour (wheaten), Geneva, Perfumed Soap, Perfumed Spirits, Private Effects, Rum, Cigars, Spirits, Mixed Spirits, Sugar, Tobacco, Tea, Wine, Watches, and various other goods.'

A medley this, certainly, in which all sorts and sizes of commodities are heaped up together with no other order or system than such as is suggested by the alphabetical initials of the several names. We may rely upon it that 'Private Effects' and 'Various other Goods' are designations which cover a vastly-diversified assemblage of articles. Those of us who are but imperfectly acquainted with the manner in which the Customs department is managed may reasonably marvel how it happens that her Majesty has such a bazaar-full of odds and ends to dispose of.

The rationale of the matter is briefly as follows. The imposition of import duties lies at the bottom of the whole affair. There is always something connected with the non-payment of such duties whenever the Queen's auctioneer is called upon to use his hammer. There may be rogues or there may not; it all depends upon the circumstances of the case. Excepting the tea-ships from China—those famous clippers which make such splendid voyages—and excepting also timber-ships and a few others, it is not customary to have one single commodity only as the cargo of a ship; it is much more usual to have two or many kinds. There are three suppositions that may be made here—all the kinds are duty-payable; or some of them are so; or some are while others are not. Now the Customs authorities look very sharply into the matter to see what is exactly

the state of the case. They know—we all know—that there is a very slippery morality prevalent on these matters. People think it no great sin to cheat the government; it is only taking a smart rise out of Mr. Gladstone, or Mr. Ward Hunt, or Mr. Lowe, or whoever may be Chancellor of the Exchequer; and if that official be a member of the political party opposed to us, we may even succeed in persuading ourselves that it is almost a virtue to prevent good money from going into his coffers. The crime is in being found out, rather than in the thing done. The Commissioners of Customs are wide awake to the prevalence of this plausible philosophy, and store up in their archives a record of all the different modes in which a slightly-immoral public may be tempted to cheat the revenue with regard to customs duties on articles imported. Arriving (say) in the Thames, a ship laden with miscellaneous commodities, on some of which an import duty is laid, is notified to the Customs department, with a list of all the merchandises on board, the names of the consignor or consignee, and so forth. An officer goes on board and takes virtual command over the cargo for a while. He may make almost any search he pleases, and ply the captain with any questions necessary to a due ascertainment of the proper correspondence between the written description and the actual cargo. Very small discrepancies may be rectified by a change in the documents; but anything of serious amount is treated as an offence, to be punished by forfeiture of the goods, perhaps also by the imposition of a fine. If all be honest and above board, the importer or consignee must be prepared to pay the duty upon such of the commodities as are taxed. A calculation is made by the proper officers—so many cwt. of coffee at so much per cwt., so much sugar at so much per cwt., and so on, until the amount which the importers owe to the Queen has been fully ascertained.

Some of the goods are subject to an *ad valorem* duty, according to a certain fixed per-centage of the value. In such cases the officers have to be keen, observant men. A trader is very much tempted to place a lower value than the real one on such commodities, in order that a lower sum may be payable in the form of duty, or to place them in a group more lightly taxed. But the officer is usually equal to the occasion. If he is certain that the articles have been purposely undervalued, with the fraudulent intent here intimated, he at once buys them in the Queen's name; the importer must sell them, and at the price named by himself; the money is paid to him, minus the duty and expenses. The system is certainly cunningly devised; for if the trader tries to evade the duty altogether, the goods are absolutely forfeited; whereas if he endeavours merely to lessen the amount of duty by naming an undervalue, he is caught in his own trap by being compelled to sell at that value. The experience acquired by the officers has taught them that one of the most fertile sources of deception is the combination of duty-payable with duty-free articles in the same ship. The former are sometimes packed among the latter in the most ingenious way—barrels, kegs, boxes, hampers, cases, bags, parcels, trusses, canisters, bottles, bundles, wrappers, apparently filled with some kind or kinds of commodity admitted duty free, will often have duty-payable articles thrust out of sight in the very midst of them. The examiners are aware of this possibility, and if their suspicions are aroused, the search is made very close indeed. Every package thus fraudulently built up is declared forfeited; and if the proceedings are very glaring, a fine as well as a forfeit is imposed.

But it may be that the taxable commodities are entered in such a way that an *immediate* payment of the duty is not demanded. The importer, consignee, or wholesale merchant may wish to keep the goods in store for a while, perhaps in expectation of being able to sell at a better price next week or next

month than just at present. The Crown, if the accounts are honestly made up in all other respects, generally permits this; but the owner must not leave the goods in the ship, nor must he take them to his own premises, nor will the Crown take care of them—he must place them in a *bonded warehouse*. These bonded warehouses, which exist at nearly all the ports, belong to private owners, who are paid a rent for the time during which the commodities are stored; but they are specially licensed by the Crown, they are jealously watched by Custom-House officers, and not a package of anything must enter or leave the gates until these Argus-eyed officials 'know the reason why.' In such places the importer deposits his commodities 'in bond,' as it is called, with most rigorous attention to bills of entry, bills of sight, and other documents. He must not transfer any of the goods from one package to another, nor must he inspect them or sort them, without the sanction and presence of officers. If any disallowed proceeding be inadvertently adopted, the owner may possibly be permitted to amend his notice, and make all right and square; but if intentional collusion or deception be discovered, down comes the law upon him: the forfeiture of his goods teaches him that there is something in the old proverb about honesty being the best policy. The Queen takes the tobacco, rum, or what not, from the bonded warehouse, and prepares to sell it by auction when and where she will.

There is another variety of circumstances under which owners part with their property in a way very uncomfortable to themselves. Many of our customs duties are imposed on foreign commodities only when for home consumption, that is, to be bought and retailed and used in the United Kingdom; if they are to be re-exported the duty is not charged. Now in such case there is great need of vigilance on the part of the officers, to see that goods so exempted are not surreptitiously sold for consumption at home. All kinds of artful dodges

would be attempted to evade the law in regard to those excepted cargoes, or portions of cargoes, were it not that the officers are known to be on the alert, ready to pounce down upon any hoghead or bale, case or bag, that is not being treated in the way it should go.

Thus it is, then, that her Majesty becomes, through her Commissioners of Customs, the owner of a very miscellaneous assortment of articles, which she has certainly no wish to keep in store, and which therefore she desires to sell to any of her subjects who will give her cash for them. There are the taxable articles which the owner attempted to get out of the ship without paying the duty. There are those which were made the objects of a pretty scheme for lumping them with other commodities bearing a lower rate of duty. There are those which have been caught neatly in a trap contrived with the intent to pass them at less than the proper value. There are the odds and ends, 'too numerous to mention,' which foolish passengers will persist in smuggling into England without paying duty, by hiding them in their pockets or hats, in their skirts or cloaks, in their bags or portmanteaus; and it must be candidly stated that the fairer half of the creation are not less prone than the rougher half to the adoption of this mode of cheating their beloved sovereign. There are the barrels and kegs which smugglers run on shore on dark nights, in defiance of preventive-service men and coast-guard men; but this kind of roguery has been greatly lessened by a lowering in the number of articles charged with import duty. But besides all these sources of accumulation, the Queen becomes possessed of certain commodities without any concealment or dishonesty whatever on the part of the owners. The goods are voluntarily abandoned. When this occurs it is usually in cases where the duty is very high compared with the intrinsic value of the article. There may be a run of low prices in the market; the owner holds back in hopes of better times; but in the meanwhile he has to pay a rental

for every day's use of the warehouse; and in addition to this, the goods become deteriorated in quality by long delay. Thus does it happen, occasionally, that the owner would rather give up the commodities altogether than keep them longer in the warehouse, or pay the duty and sell at present prices. He makes a present of them to the Crown; the Crown burns or otherwise destroys such of the merchandise as may be too much damaged to command any price at all, and sets by the rest for sale by auction.

When we consider how numerous, how almost infinitely-varied are the articles which may be included in any of the above-named groupings, there will be no ground for marvel that the periodical sales by the Commissioners of Customs deal with a very miscellaneous assemblage of commodities. No one class of buyers will suffice; many classes must be appealed to; and it rests with the officers and the auctioneer so to manage the details as to find purchasers for everything, and at the best prices that can be obtained under the circumstances.

Let us wend our way to that strange Mincing Lane, the very home of grocery and spices, and of a limited number of other eatables and drinkables. You know very little of what Mincing Lane really sells by merely passing through it; for there are but few shops, and few things in the windows. Not only is almost every house occupied by merchants and brokers engaged in this particular kind of commerce, but almost every room in some of the houses is occupied by a separate firm. To so remarkable a degree is this the case, that although there are only sixty houses in Mincing Lane, there are actually three hundred and sixty firms which have their offices or places of business in these houses. Foreigners muster strongly there; for almost everything sold in Mincing Lane has been grown in foreign climes—Langenscheid, Meulengrabet, Ducassee, Claveau, Ehlers, Mankiewicz, Mendel, Bennike, Clairmonte, Detmold, Krauss, Mahler, Brumleu,

Cortissas, Cuadra, Freudentheil, Hagdan, Gerich, Herz, Liebermann, Nauen, Reggio, Torre, Vanhouse, Wieso, Albisser, Ziegele, Barriasson, Auerbach, Dael, Rosenthal, Schlemann, Albers, Gildemeister, Brandstetter, De Castro, Deffel, Ernsthause, Oesterleg, Grosscurth, Luboldt, Knaua, Schröder, Bäsinger, Selb, Schmidt, Vander Zee, Czarnikow, Prier de Same, Jahn, Benito, Ehlers, Glohn, Hecht, Jäger, Jordi, Paparritor, Yriarte, Hintz, Gulich, Meugens, Herzog, Oelrichs, Sifken, Cateaux, Trier, Benoliel—here they all are, large as life, and ready to transact any amount of business that will pay reasonably well. Mincing Lane gives the simple designation of merchant to many of its commercial men; while in other cases qualifying words are used to denote the kind of merchandize chiefly dealt in: such as tea merchant, Oporto merchant, provision merchant, wine merchant, spirit merchant, East India merchant, indigo merchant, colonial produce merchant, West India merchant, oil merchant, drug merchant, French wine merchant, cotton merchant, cotton waste merchant, Montilla wine merchant, rice merchant, together with commission merchant and general merchant. But more remarkable than the merchants are the brokers, who have nothing of their own to sell, but who make a living by buying and selling for other people. Mincing Lane is crowded with them—indigo brokers, colonial brokers, cinnamon brokers, East India brokers, tea brokers, metal brokers, West India brokers, coffee brokers, sugar brokers, refined sugar brokers, fruit brokers, drug brokers, chemical brokers, ivory brokers, drysaltery brokers, produce brokers, cotton brokers, rice brokers, and a few ship and insurance brokers—though these latter affect Fenchurch and Leadenhall Streets rather than Mincing Lane. An immense amount of business is transacted by brokers, who know all the buyers and all the sellers, and how to bring them together. The Commercial Sale Rooms are one of the head-quarters of the Mincing Lane merchants and bro-

kers; and here the Queen holds her periodical sales by auction of Custom House forfeitures.

It is evident at a glance, when the auctioneer is mounted on his rostrum at the Commercial Sale Room, that he is confronted by persons well up in the technical details of Custom House usages. They know all about 'rummage' and 'ullage.' They are familiar with the strange mode adopted of denoting fractional parts of a gallon of spirits, by dividing one gallon into thirty-two parts, and then dividing one of those parts into tenths. They are not frightened at such a

fraction as $\left(\frac{1}{32}\right)$ which results from such a mode of computation, but which looks to ordinary folk a very complicated way of saying seven-tenths of a gill. They know what the catalogue means by its variations in the official conditions of sale. When they are told that some of the lots are to be sold 'For Home Consumption, on payment of the proper duties;' that others may be sold 'For Exportation or Home Consumption, on payment of the proper duties;' that they may be sold 'at buyers' prices,' or 'all at' a minimum price named by the Government, or at any price that exceeds (so as to cover) the duty; that others are 'To be delivered to licensed manufacturers only, and to be packed and labelled at the buyers' expense;' that in others 'The price of the stone bottle (1s. 2d.) to be paid by the purchaser'—when they are told these things, they are at no loss to put the proper interpretation on each variety of condition or stipulation. It naturally results from all this, that nearly the whole of the buyers are persons connected with the particular trades to which the commodities belong; they know the wholesale houses, they know the recognized brokers, they know the current prices; and this accumulated knowledge places them in a position to judge at once whether it is or is not advantageous to purchase a particular lot at a particular price. One of the uninitiated may prime himself beforehand to a certain extent. He may ferret out the im-

portant fact that *rummage* denotes one kind, and *seizure* another kind, of commodities offered for sale by the Customs authorities; and that *allage* is the quantity of liquor in a cask when the said cask is not quite full. But after all, such knowledge only tells to a limited degree in the auction room; you feel that you are still an outsider, and that you ought to look with some kind of reverence to those who evidently know all about it.

How the lots become made up as they are only the initiated can say. '78 sample bottles, 3 gallons, red wine, 11; 21 pint bottles, 1 1/2 gallons, white wine, 11 (ullage)!' This is all Greek to an outsider. And when we see the auctioneer knock down for one shilling a lot comprising 13 bottles of cordials, 3 bottles of cherry cordials, and 1 bottle of sweetened spirits, we consider whether all the people in the room are gone mad, to let such a bargain slip from them; but we find that the buyer will have to pay the duty, and possibly there are other little secrets which need consideration: He must surely have been an impudent fellow who bid half a crown for '6 boxes of candied peel, 1 lb. confectionery, 2 qrs. figs, 20 lb. raisins, 2 baskets, 1 qr. 22 lb. figs, 1 ullage bottle vinegar, about 27 lb. perfumed soap,' but probably he was prepared for the result, that the biddings ran up to 44s.; and very likely he was the last bidder as well as the first. 'Three cases, articles of tin manufacture;' somebody bid 10s. for this, and a most spirited competition ran up the biddings to 7l. 10s. Whether culinary tins or tin toys, they had been well inspected beforehand, and each bidder knew precisely what he would do with them if he became the purchaser. It may be mentioned here, that none of the articles are in the sale-room; they are in warehouses and cellars at the several docks and at the Custom House, where they have been on view for two or three days, and where the wines and spirits have been tasted under certain conditions. Every man at the sale-room has his catalogue, and

knows precisely which lot or lots may be worth his attention. 'About 261 pieces of china ware;' where they came from, or why the Queen obtained them as 'rummage,' was not stated, but the lot brought 52s. —say, five pieces of china for a shilling. '20 lb cigars.*' Mercy on us! When we find these going at 5s. 6d. per lb., out of which 5s. goes for duty, leaving only 6d. per lb. for the cigars themselves, we marvel what the tobacco may be like! 'Six silver watches,' put up by the Crown at 3l. the lot, and knocked down at 5l. 15s., or about 19s. each. Well: may they keep good time! If the reader can steady his mind to a consideration of such a medley, let him decide how much he would give for '1 case, 6 bottles, perfumery; 9 lb. chocolate; 1 piece linen manufacture; 1 piece cotton; 1 coffee roaster; 1 bottle, silver leaf; 1 empty flask and toys; 2 bottles drugs; 4 boxes stearine candles; 1 box painters' colours;' the lot went for 49s. '276 bottles hair oil, 9 bottles hair wash, 42 packages sealing-wax, 1 lb. stearine candles, 25 lb. ditto:' how much? 84s. About 3d. a bottle for the hair oil, and all the sealing-wax and candles given in. If there be any raiment, new or old, male or female, adult or juvenile, elegant or coarse, for sale, bidders of another class make their appearance in the room. A lot for which Messrs. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Nathan, Benjamin, and Solomon bid very actively, was '1 box, sundry articles of wearing apparel; 12 books, and sundry private effects; 4 pairs woollen socks; 6 shirts; 1 pair boots; 4 coats; 6 pairs trousers; 3 vests; 2 pairs socks; 2 neckties; 1 muffler; 1 cask, containing wild camomile flowers.' Why the Queen seized these eligible commodities is a matter for speculation; but she put them up at 30s., and the biddings advanced a shilling or two at a time, until at length,—'Going! Going! Going at 96s.1 Gone.'

* Why does not the Queen teach her catalogue-maker how to spell? In one place he says, 'segars;' in others 'cigars.'

MEALS FOR THE MILLION.

THE old proverb which declares our dinners and our cooks to come from such very different sources of supply is justified in no country so completely as in our own. If expense be no consideration, you can get a better dinner in London than in any capital of Europe. This is the opinion of those best acquainted with the resources of the head quarters of cookery—Paris herself. And between an English dinner *de luxe* and a French dinner *de luxe* there is no difference as concerns character. The 'plain roast and boiled' which contented even the well-to-do of our forefathers, will no longer pass muster among those who have a choice in the matter; and many who have not a choice chafe at the severe family fare with which their class were formerly content.

'Why was I born with tastes refined—
Why do I love Lafitte?'

was the despairing exclamation of a fugitive poet who was born for better things than he could get; and there are many among us in these days who have the 'fatal gift' of palates above their station in life—who are spoiled for the ordinary domestic dinner by the occasional experience of a more festive repast out of doors. For people of limited means may make themselves acquainted with the rudiments of a good dinner at even second and third rate restaurants in London; and discriminating diners-out fare far better than they could hope to fare at home upon the same expenditure. You cannot dine with Lucullus for five shillings in the great metropolis; but you can get a very fair repast, comprising all the representative courses, for that amount, at tolerably—conspicuous places; and if you have the hardihood to dive into Soho, you may do it for half the money. But these advantages are impracticable for people in domestic life; and domestic cooking under conditions of moderate means is a sad thing even to think about. The ordinary class of cooks, who do not aspire to be called more

than 'plain,' are simply monsters in female form. They cannot cook a potato, to begin with, even in the most primitive manner. They can in Ireland by intuition. In that distracted country they may shoot landlords, but their conduct in connection with potatoes is beyond reproach. So great is their enthusiasm for the vegetable, that they put it into poetry, and give it a place of honour shared only with *potheen*. How sings a national, but anonymous bard?

'The greatest diversion that's under the sun
Is to sit by the fire 'till the pratties are
done—
The beautiful creatures all bursting with pride,
And a noggin of buttermilk close by your
side?'

Fancy such an anomaly as the glorification of the potato in an English song! British rhymsters have done something for roast beef, but never in a spirit as if they cared about the cookery; and as for Scottish poets, we have it, on the authority of Mr. Lever's Major O'Shaughnessy, that their songs embrace only two subjects—they are devoted either to 'lasses with lint white locks or some absurd laudation of the barley sake.' This is a libel, of course, for which damages might be claimed in a court of law; but I believe I am right—I sit corrected if wrong—in declaring that Scottish poets have never written in praise of porridge.

However this may be, it is certain that Englishmen have no national dish for which they have an affection for its own sake. Plum pudding cannot be counted, for it is connected only with Christmas, and mainly with juvenile tastes; and as for roast beef, the sentiment connected with it is fast declining in the present day. When in full force, it was especially in honour of the great feast of the year; and in later times it has maintained its place principally in association with British triumphs over a neighbouring nation, then supposed to feed only upon frogs—with 'the Battle and the Breeze' and the flattering

idea that one Englishman could always beat ten Frenchmen upon the shortest notice. No: the English have no national dish which, as the food of the nation, they have been able to defend against all comers; they have no *pot-au-feu*, for instance, like the French; and the million—the mass of the people—know nothing, and care nothing, about the manner in which their food should be cooked. The poorest families live upon tea and bread and butter to a distressing extent, with only occasional intervals of meat; and when their meat comes—it may be twice, or perhaps only once a week—what can they make of it? The raw material is the worst that the market can supply. There is no more sad sight in London than that of workmen's wives on Saturday nights bargaining for stale pieces with the fresh pieces before their eyes—reserved for people with more money. And the intelligent interest taken by children in the matter is sadder still—poor little things, who, so far from shuddering, as more opulent children would do; at the mere aspect of a butcher's shop, take a technical interest in the display, worship sirloins from afar, and admire mutton-chops as if they were so many works of art. Children take instinctively the tone of their parents. I once heard of a little girl—a pretty little thing who had been brought up in luxury, her mother being a principal singer at the Italian Opera. Mamma was making a tour in the provinces under the auspices of a distinguished *entrepreneur*, who farmed the whole party, and provided everything. They arrived one night at a great commercial town, where the best accommodation in the best hotel had been provided for their reception. The family walked through the suite of apartments—alive with gilding and mirrors—and some surprise was expressed at the more than usual magnificence. '*N'importe*,' said the charming child, throwing the light of her beaming eyes round the decorations—'*N'importe*; *c'est Brown qui paie*.' Brown, of course, was the *entrepreneur*. The poor children

who admire the mutton-chops see things in a similar spirit. A well-known author tells us that he once heard a couple of little girls of this class who were talking upon personal matters, and one said to the other, 'Once I had a halfpenny, and bought apples with it.' They were taking an independent view of the things, and casting aside family cares; but the common talk of the poor is upon matters of domestic economy which they hear discussed by their parents.

But to return. When the poor have got their meat, what do they do with it? We have our experience of 'plain cooks' who come from this class. We know that they spoil half the food committed to their care. They cannot, of course, cook a potato. It comes up three-cornered as to shape, and black and blue as regards appearance. In consistency it is too soft without and too hard within. The result is an infliction upon the consumer. They serve your mutton and your beef in a similar fashion; and if you urge upon them the simplest tactics upon the authority of the cookery books, they tell you that they do not understand these French fashions—proper cookery of the plainest kind they consider foreign, and despise accordingly. These are the defects of professionals; we may suppose, therefore, if we did not know, what their amateur cookery must be. It is about as savage, in fact, as that of cannibals, who are content to cut up their enemies into convenient morsels and throw them into the flames. Even prosperous people of the humbler ranks are seldom able to get a dinner properly prepared at home—it is usually sent to the baker's. When they *do* cook at home there is more waste, proportionately, than there is in a nobleman's kitchen. To take a simple illustration: they seldom think of utilizing the water in which meat has been boiled, for the sake of soup, but throw it away with a large proportion of the strength of the meat.

The poorer classes of French, with far inferior materials, live in a state of comparative luxury. The Paris

ouvrier, in however small a way, has a regular *cuisine*. His wife, whatever else she is not, is sure to be a cook. The fare may be a little monotonous—the standing *pot-au-feu* being its foundation—but it is not more monotonous than the food of the poor in this country. The French peasant, too, has the same advantages. The preparation of his meals is the main business of his wife. Look into his cottage about the middle of the day, and you will find the dame devoting her whole energies to the task. She has an array of appliances in the way of pots and pans of which an English housewife of the same class would scarcely know the use. Such appurtenances are as inevitable in the French home as the prints of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI. in various phases of their troubles, the murder of the Princesse de Lamballe, and Napoléon crossing the bridge of Lodi, that adorn the walls. She expects her husband and sons shortly to arrive, and the savour of the fare with which they are to be welcomed is appetizing even to visitors who have breakfasted baronially and mean to dine ducally. Were she and her husband and sons English instead of French, they would not dine but would only 'get their dinners.' In England the meal would be snatched—in France it is deliberately enjoyed. In France, in all grades of life, dinner is the event of the day—with a little concession in favour of breakfast, the claims of which are recognized in a proportionate degree. The food may not be sumptuous, but it is wholesome and savoury, and differs, therefore, in both respects, from that of the poor in England. The time has long since passed when the French were supposed to live upon frogs. We are most of us aware in these days that the only kind of frog that ever comes to the kitchen—and only the legs of these are eaten—is by no means plentiful, and can be included therefore only in costly repasts. As for horse, the consumption of the noble animal is certainly increasing in France, but I suspect principally among intelligently experimental people,

and not as an economical alternative to beef. Indeed the horse *must* be more expensive than the ox as an article of food, if it be killed in a healthy state and is really fit to be eaten. Under other conditions a repugnance to partake of him need not be associated with prejudice against horseflesh merely as a novelty. As for the 'movement' in England, it obtained no hold upon the people, nor is it likely to do so. Apart from the practical objection—which is well appreciated in this country—Englishmen have a natural dislike to exploring fresh fields for animal food, and they have a sentimental feeling in favour of the horse which is quite strong enough to keep him out of the kitchen. Many men will overwork and torture him, and treat the noblest servant of the human race with shameful ingratitude. But it does not follow, therefore, that they will eat him. The same kind of people will overwork, torture, and generally ill-treat any of their own species over whom they have authority—for the sake of money, or in a brutal spirit of tyranny. But they would not feed upon their human victims for all that; and as regards their carnivorous requirements they draw the line decidedly at the horse. The idea of making a meal upon an animal that had won money for him in a race, earned money for him between the shafts, or pulling at the plough, carried him to battle, after the hounds, or even in the Park—is repugnant to an Englishman in any condition of life; and there is no fear of any class of the tribe, from that of Blue Gown to that of Old Dobbin, finding his way to the meat markets in this country. It is true that Englishmen make the most of the horse after he is dead, and his flesh is sold as food for domestic animals, and the fact is repulsive enough; but there is some difference between selling a dead horse and killing him for your food.

The great argument used by the advocates of horse eating—a very delusive one, as we have seen—is the increasing expense of animal

food, which makes wholesome meat almost a prohibited article to the poorest classes in England. It is satisfactory, therefore, to find that new fields of supply have been opened—not in this country and in an opposition to a very proper prejudice, but on the other side of the globe and under conditions opposed to no prejudice whatever—except, indeed, in the absence of experience, the natural suspicion that the promises held forth were too good to be true.

In England we have too many people and not enough food; in Australia they have too few people, and more food than they know what to do with. Here we may consider ourselves fortunate, if, in a few years, we can find standing room; there, they have vast regions, known and unknown, waiting for inhabitants. The tendency of things is that the population of this country will drift in enormous numbers to the fifth quarter of the globe. In the mean time, as the hungry Mahomet will not, or cannot, go all at once to the Meat Mountain, the Meat Mountain must come to him. Thanks to some enterprising speculators, the superfluous food of the antipodes is being brought to our doors; and the only difficulty remaining is to induce those who guard our doors to receive it. That there should be some doubt in the first instance was to be expected. Over half the circumference of the globe is a long way to look for a leg of mutton; and there seemed some justification for the fear that it might not be quite fit to eat upon its arrival. But the notion is nonsense after all. Everybody eats sardines. Sometimes they eat sprats in sardine form under the influence of delusion. Neither the true nor the false fish are brought quite so far as the distance between this country and Australia; but they are continually kept as long as would suffice for the voyage, and we have no prejudice against them. On the contrary, we consume sardines rather as luxuries than otherwise; we certainly do not employ them as economical provender for schools or families. They are eaten by the

rich and the generally well-to-do; and if not partaken of by the poor, it is because, though reasonable enough in price, they are not sufficiently profitable articles of consumption. Then again, everybody, at least occasionally, eats provisions preserved in tins—soups and stews especially, which, as sold by Messrs. — and Messrs. — (let us not make invidious distinctions), are real boons to housekeepers, large and small. These articles are of course prepared in this country, but, like sardines, they are frequently kept a sufficient time before consumption to have made a long voyage. And they have very frequently made a long voyage before they are disposed of. The exportation of tinned provisions to India is enormous; and among our countrymen in the East they are esteemed the greatest of luxuries. The poor there cannot pay for them; but they are on every rich man's table. Oysters, lobsters, and salmon, are not to be obtained except in the hermetically sealed condition; but other articles which are to be had fresh from the local bazaars find most favour when imported; and it is a positive recommendation to any dishes offered to you at a dinner party in India, if your host is able to say that they have come from England. Doubtless there is a little national partiality in the preference. But English people accustomed to luxurious living would not eat day after day of preserved bacon and preserved soups and stews, unless they were not only fit for food, but worthy of the high prices they command. Why, then, should there be any prejudice against Australian meat—supposing that it reaches us in as good condition as English meat arrives in India? On the contrary, there is every reason why it should be the more welcomed—seeing that it is intended to supply a positive need and to facilitate a desirable economy. It seems strange, indeed, if food furnished under conditions acceptable to the rich in India should be spurned upon sentimental grounds by the poor in England. Yet it is certain that there has been

a feeling against Australian meat, to be accounted for only upon the inconsistent ground that it is cheap, and therefore an immense boon to immense numbers of persons. The idea prevailed, it is said, that the importation was specially intended for the poor—that the production was something inferior, and was despised by those who could afford to buy in the ordinary markets. This was quite enough to cause mistrust; for the poor have a keen sense of the rights of equality, and will never consent to be classified in such a matter as food. Moreover, some of the earlier experiments in preserving were not so successful as they have been since, and the feasibility of the scheme did not pass unquestioned. But by degrees the novelty became better known—it ceased to be a novelty, in fact—and the supply becoming steady, there was reason to suppose that something like a regular demand was growing up. Those who made the first experiments in the new food were, I believe, not so much the poor proper as better classes of persons having reasons for the practice of economy, or desirous upon general grounds to put the promises of the importers to a test. The poor, however, soon began to see their own advantage in the matter; and the original prejudice, though still existing to some extent, is fast disappearing under the influence of experience. There are now two large purveyors of Australian meat—a company and a private firm—and they are believed to have an enormous trade. The founders of the Australian Meat Company were among the pioneers of the movement; but they have an enterprising follower in the private firm, which has given a development to the original design well worthy of notice—that is to say, he has started an establishment where his retail customers can consume their purchases on the premises.

Norton Folgate, where the premises are situated, is not a nice place to look at, and it appears to have a speciality for not being witty. At any rate, one of the

authors of the 'Rejected Addresses,' describing the *personnel* of a City entertainment (in a strictly ironical manner), infers as much, when he says—

'Comme il faut from Butchers' Row,
Elegance from Aldgate,
Modish airs from Wapping Stairs,
And wit from Norton Folgate.'

Never mind: if Norton Folgate is not a nice place to look at, it is all the more likely to be nearer the residences of many patrons of the penny dinners; and if it is not witty, let us hope that it is wise, and will encourage their consumption. The establishment itself is like an oasis in a desert—so cheerful is it, in appearance. Its normal aspect from the pavement is that of an ordinary shop for the sale of cooked provisions, piles of which are displayed in the window, to the evident delight of the local public, who crowd round as people do round shows at a fair. And I am certain that neither the pig-faced lady nor the spotted boy could command more rapt attention than do the joints and 'nuggets' of mutton, the sausages, and the colonies here exhibited in so attractive a form. Just as you see people at a show, too—every now and then one or two of the admirers are carried away by their feelings, make a clutch at the coppers in their pockets, and go inside, followed by the eyes of the remainder, who regard them for the time being in the light of public characters. We—that is to say, myself and a friend—follow some of these, partake of their temporary distinction, and find ourselves in a gorgeous scene. It is Christmas week, so the decorations may be special for the occasion: they certainly do great credit to glazed calico of rainbow hues; and the inscriptions, setting forth the names of the Antipodean places which are the sources of supply, add information to ornament. There is a crowd of persons round the counter, some making purchases with a view to carrying them away; others, who have taken tickets at a place provided for the purpose, waiting for the dinners

which they mean to consume summarily—the primitive arrangement being that each diner takes his own plate and plants himself at one of the tables inside, thus simplifying the duties of the waiter, who has only to collect the crockery from time to time.

By inside, I mean a large room at the back of the shop, and decorated in the same festive manner. The tables extend on either side as you enter, and range from one end to the other. There are nearly as many guests as they can accommodate, although it is two o'clock in the afternoon, and the great rush is over; for the mass of diners incline to early hours, and keep them with a punctuality which is said to be the soul of business, and has a great deal to do with pleasure also. To characterize the class of persons present, one would have to say, in the first place, that they are mixed. We expected to find none but the poorest class represented—to find even beggars regaling themselves upon the bounty received at the last street corner. And certainly you have a right to suppose, when a mendicant makes twopence upon the distinct understanding that he has not tasted food since some fancy period in the past, that he will immediately supply the deficiency at the most convenient place. But beggars, we were told, like thieves, disdain such fare and such company as are to be found in Norton Folgate, and not by these does the establishment expect or desire to be supported. Some of the diners to-day are poor enough, judging by appearances. But they seem to be respectable people; and some are of a grade that you would scarcely expect to see represented at such a place. Those two young men, for instance, in the sleek chimney-pot hats (the run of hats are wide-awake) and careful collars with the corners turned down—as if to mark the place where they had left off *not* reading—are clerks, I suppose, or shopkeepers' assistants. If their salaries amount to only fifty pounds a year, which is possible enough, the place must be as great a boon to them as to even poorer

people, who are not obliged to wear coats of conventional cut, sleek chimney-pots, and the dog-eared collars aforesaid. But youth is ever open to temptation, and these youngsters seem to be wasting their substance on riotous living. Not content with the penny plate of satisfying soup, nor even with the twopenny one of Irish stew, they are actually taking both—dining off two courses, the young gourmands. The penny plate is indeed a dinner to many of the customers, being satisfying, as I have said. As for the twopenny plate, it is a feast, including, as it does, potatoes and the usual ingredients of the dish. Irish stew, by-the-way, is the only solid form in which the meat is dispensed here: for it goes somewhat farther in this form than in any other, and variety would be difficult to obtain under the general conditions of supply and service.

I notice several other young men of a similar stamp, and here and there a person of more mature years and more dignified bearing, with all the signs—and signs they are—of having seen better days. That man, for instance, with the grizzled hair and whisker—the latter carefully trimmed—has certainly not been accustomed all his life to this kind of *cuisine*. His reverses, too, must have been recent; for the frock-coat which he wears so closely buttoned up is an old coat, but has evidently been a good one—and there is as much difference between an old good coat and an old bad coat, as there is between the two garments when both are new. Indeed it is in its decline, perhaps, that the good coat principally asserts itself. The wearer in the present case has, I suspect, advertised in the 'Times' for employment, and is dining in Norton Folgate pending an answer to his appeal.

There is a little of the 'rough' element in the society, but not much; and it gets less, we are told, as the better element increases. For 'roughs' stand by their order, and are averse to respectable interlopers. With all respect for the 'roughs,' it must be said that the prejudice is a fortunate one; for it is the respect-

able poor who suffer most from poverty, and the penny dinner is a far greater boon to them than it is to the class who are accustomed to scramble for their food from day to day.

It remains to give a few details of what the food consists. It is all mutton, but varied, as we have seen, in form. Beyond the dining-room is the store where it may be seen in its uncooked state. Large barrels are standing on end in rows. It is in these that the bulk of the meat is packed, and, as it appears, in most effectual style. The joints are all hanging from the beams above you and piled on the tables against the wall, are all alike. They are all haunches of mutton, with the bones removed except as regards the shank-bone, by which they may be most conveniently handled. The other parts of the animal, it seems, can be made more profitable in the colony, owing to the larger amount of fat that they contain. They are melted down, for the most part, and made into tallow. Some of the melted fat is used to fill up the vacant space after the meat has been placed in the barrels; and they are thus sealed hermetically in a more efficient manner than by any other process. The meat has been slightly salted previously, and it certainly seems to have suffered nothing in health and freshness during its travels. The general verdict as regards taste is in its favour. Its price is only fourpence halfpenny a pound. The same meat is brought over, for the convenience of retail purchasers, in tins. This is cooked, and costs in that state about sixpence a pound. Complaints are occasionally made about the tinned meat, which sometimes turns up in bad condition. But this, it seems, is simply due to the occasional failure of the 'hermetically sealing' process. Unless the air inside is thoroughly ex-

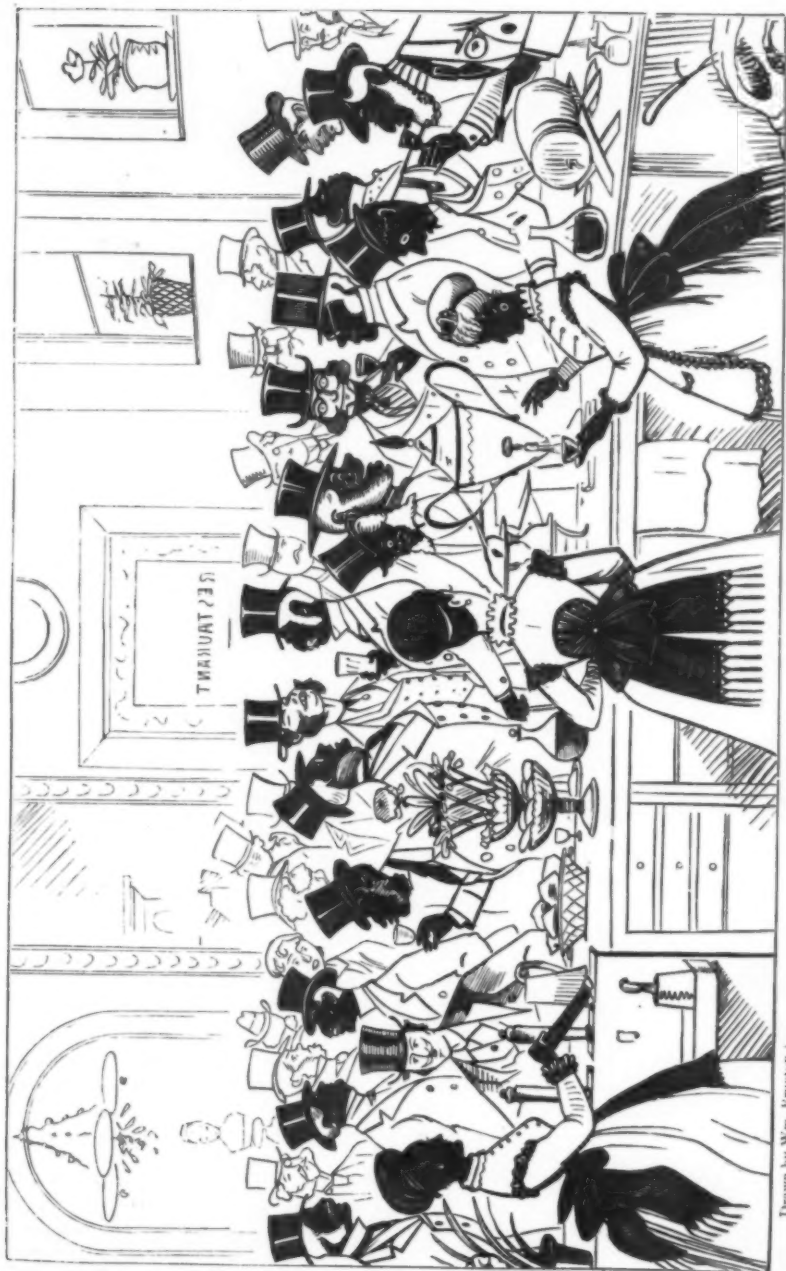
hausted before the final closing, the contents will spoil, and this part of the work requires considerable nicety. Perhaps there is a want of skilled hands to perform it, for we never hear of the same complaint being made of preserved meats in Europe. However, the purveyors make a point of taking back all the failures, and giving successes in exchange, so that it is the purchaser's own fault if he is a sufferer.

Beyond this storeroom is that important place, the kitchen, with such enormous coppers, and such a wonderful engine for chopping the Irish stew in its preliminary stage! The latter looks like a guillotine worked by machinery—a refinement unknown even to revolutionary France. As for the coppers, beholding the contents stirred with those enormous ladles, your first impression is a very simple one—that you would not like to fall in; the next is that there is a great deal of steam about, and that the smell of dinner is overpowering. How the stokers stand for so long as they do is difficult to imagine. But discomforts of this kind are inseparable from feasting on a large scale; and at Norton Folgate, we were told, about a thousand persons are entertained every day.

May their shadows never grow less in number! For the movement is a very excellent one, and deserves every kind of recommendation that can lead to its extension. Other aid it does not require, as the 'Penny Dinners' are supplied upon purely commercial principles. A profit is secured by the purveyors, and the penny, twopenny, or threepenny diners, as the case may be, are under no obligation to anybody. They pay their pence and keep the place going, upon as honourable conditions as the patrons of the London Tavern or the Freemasons' pay their guineas with the same result.

S. L. B.





Drawn by Wm. Brunton.



Alfred Thompson

THE COMING S



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1870

Apropos de bottes

NG SEASON

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ON AND OFF THE STAGE.

Drawn by Gordon Thomson.

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VOL. X

LUNCHEON BARS.

I HAVE heard a lunch defined as an insult to one's breakfast and an outrage on one's dinner. Some people evade the imputation by dining at lunch time, or by making the lunch one's dinner. In modern life we nearly all dine in the evening, but, nevertheless, we feel hungriest at the noonday; and so it is said that, from her Majesty downwards, we make a dinner at our lunch, and a supper at our dinner. There are people who will only take a biscuit or a crust for lunch, and some who only take the very slightest breakfast and hold out till an eight o'clock dinner. I apprehend that is a bad habit. It was Lord George Bentinck's, and he dropped rather suddenly. The etherealized beings whom we meet at dinner-parties make bird-like peckings, which contrast gracefully with our grosser feeding. But we say commonly that they have virtually made a good wholesome dinner at half-past one—a hot fowl or leg of mutton—and have carried out the idea by a five-o'clock cup of tea. But let not the ladies suppose that the worthy husband has been working like a steam engine all day without taking in coal and water. The noble animal has perhaps been disporting himself in rich pastures since breakfast-time, and returns home to the great event of the day in a highly-fed and succulent condition. He has made ample acquaintance with the great modern institution of Luncheon Bars.

And let it not be supposed that luncheon is confined to the modest repast snatched hastily at a luncheon bar. Our homely notes will chiefly be confined to these; but the term is construed in a large and liberal sense. There are many men who make a thoroughly British dinner for their lunch, without prejudice to the later refection at home. A fish dinner, whether at Billingsgate or in Cheapside, is a great favourite. Fish presents the advantage of being easily and soon digested, and so leaving its votaries in an orthodox state of hunger for the evening. I sup-

pose it is on this account that M. Agassiz so strongly presses men, especially of a sedentary and literary life, to make fish as large an element as possible in their diet. The system of Lent, when it prevailed, certainly had the advantage of encouraging our fisheries, and giving men a wholesome change from the perpetual meat diet. You get an astonishing amount of fish at these places, salmon and all other things in their season; but the chairs are so close, the tables so crowded, the waiting so hurried, that fish being very bony creatures, their consumption must be attended with some peril. As for a bowl of oyster sauce to keep the cod in company, it reminds us of the Virgilian line, 'Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.' At these fish dinners they brew a very seductive liquor called *punch*, and its potation during business hours is occasionally disastrous to ordinary business purposes. Many at other places go in for a cut of the joint, with cheese and colery, and, like soldiers, find that in the daily battle of life they can fight best upon beef. Some time ago there was a letter strongly recommending the French eating-houses in the mysterious region skirted by the squares of Leicester and Soho. I went at two o'clock, being given to understand that this was a good time of the day. And they certainly gave you a clear, good, vegetable soup, and, wonderful to say, only charged you threepence for it, thereby opening up a vista of views respecting culinary profits. The 'Times' said—and I will not dispute its opinion—that it was as good as the soup which you get at the clubs. But when upon the simple basis of soup you proceeded to elaborate a good French lunch, then the time consumed between the removes was immense. The French have no idea of time, and they think that you have no idea either. Order a French dinner, if you will, or go to sup with choice spirits, with whom it is pleasant to while away some hours; but to have a good lunch, and to have

it quick, is a contradiction in terms at a French eating-house.

And this reminds me of the fundamental distinction between the frequenters of luncheon bars. There are those, according to the classical proverb, who live to eat, and those who eat to live. There are some persons who enter a luncheon bar with a knowingness and a deliberation which indicate that they are about to lay out the limited space of time available for the luncheon bar to the greatest possible advantage. They select the best bar, and at the best bar they select the best things. With a cool, critical eye they run down the bill of fare, and with instinctive judgment make a selection which reflects credit on their taste. But if a man is exceedingly busy, or very much occupied in mind, he has no time for this. He has perhaps stayed at his post until faintness, or the gnawing tooth of hunger, has absolutely driven him from his work to the luncheon bar; and thus he has a wandering eye and a preoccupied air. He has not the slightest idea what he is eating, whether roast or boiled, joint or *entrée*. He satisfies a brute, canine instinct, and retires. Such a man has been known to come to a luncheon bar with a pen behind his ear. Such a one always brings a note-book, some memoranda, or a pocketful of letters with him. Such a one has a business friend with him; and they will continue their discussion or negotiation in the brief allotment of time apportioned to refectation. They are probably lean, unwholesome-looking men, with bodily disorganization of some sort setting in, chiefly because they bolt their food whole, and allow no time for digestion. I know of an invalid of this sort, who, in solemn repentance for his ill-advised alacrity in feeding, has stuck up all over his house inscriptions in large letters—'Masticate, masticate, masticate!' A judicious man, who knows that he has a great deal of important work to do, and wishes to do it in a high state of bodily efficiency, generally confines himself to a mutton chop and a glass of sherry, which he transacts leisurely. If there is head-

work, really requiring attention, a man is very careful in his diet. You cannot be loading two great organs with work at the same time without impeding and impairing their action. This is a most elementary physiological truth. The other day I saw one of our most distinguished writers take his lunch at a luncheon bar, which some of us know, in the immediate vicinity of the British Museum. It consisted of a cold sausage and a hot potato. A glass of beer was ordered for the good of the house, but, I believe, not drunk. That was perhaps an heavy a lunch as he dared venture with important work on hand in the great reading room.

Then there are City luncheon places with specialities. Birch's in Cornhill is such a place. Birch has a speciality, and that speciality is soup. You can go to Birch's and get turtle soup—calipash and calipee—four shillings a plate. You sometimes find people coming from the West Indies who are satiated with turtle—turtle chops, and turtle soup, and yet this simple necessity of life is considerably removed from the reach of ordinary Londoners. At Birch's they will give you pastry and patties, but the theory of the institution is manifestly turtle soup, with some sound sherry to carry out the idea. You will find the rooms filled, three stories of them, with soup-devouring human beings; and in the late cold wintry weather hot soup really appeared to be the best thing which you could devour. Ladies abound here—not curtained off into a separate domain of their own and an escort not *de rigueur*—but diffusing a charm and an aroma over the apartment. Comfortable and spacious are these ladies, by-the-way, with an appearance suggestive of extreme solvency on the part of themselves or their male belongings. I am persuaded that directly an old lady has received her dividend at the Bank she crosses the road and gets a basin of turtle soup at Birch's. 'Pimm's,' as we used to call it, is also a well-known luncheon place; it belongs to Mr. Sawyer now—the old oyster shop in which the City men, going down

to their suburban homes in the evening, especially from the Saturday to the Monday, will pick out some of the finest and reddest lobsters or give their orders for a barrel of oysters. Here we used to partake plentifully of that delicate mollusk, but, alas! only daintily and sparingly now, at their well-nigh prohibitive prices. Now that oysters are so dear I should not be surprised if the British public made a direct set in the direction of periwinkles. I talked once with an enlightened fishmonger who told me that he always gave his children *carte blanche* among the periwinkles, inasmuch as they were so peculiarly wholesome. Mr. Sawyer has had a large handsome luncheon bar opened next to the fish shop, which fills remarkably well. You have to stand, but you are served with the most commendable quickness, and depart speedily, and you have something moderate to pay. I have heard it asserted that every human being is like some animal. You become convinced of the truth of the assertion when you are standing at a large London luncheon bar. You see monkeyfied men, doggified men, equize, and even, I am afraid, asinine men, all busy in the great animal function of taking in provender. The most dignified beings of the human race would, however, suffer some loss of dignity when they take their lunch, as the children of Israel took their last taste of the fleshpots of Egypt, standing and with their loins girded. Pimm's, however, is entitled to the merit of presenting a considerable variety of comestibles. I entertain a strong opinion that as a man of average life spends many months in the operation of dining, it is worth his while to do so as gracefully and with as much taste as he can. Now at Pimm's they certainly give you a considerable variety. And if there are times in which it is prudent to dine off a single dish, I need scarcely say with what anxious solicitude that dish should be selected. On most occasions it is pleasant and agreeable that there should be a variety. Now Pimm will give you lobster dressed, or escal-

loped oyster reposing amid bread crumbs in the scallop shell, or some game pie, the British chop, &c. &c.

Several crowded luncheon bars will give you plenty of good things, but would positively decline to accommodate you with a chair, and would look with horror on the intrusion of a newspaper. The reason is obvious enough. Their great rooms stand empty nearly all the day, but will fill to overflowing in the hour or hour and a half to two hours in the middle of the day. Then there is a rush of business, and it is of course an object to obtain as much business as possible. To achieve this desirable object the principle seems to be to make you as comfortable as possible in the inner, and as uncomfortable as possible in the outer man. I know one great luncheon bar where there is a slender ledge behind a table, on which a bird could hardly perch, and yet this is sought as a vantage ground by men who wish to get a slight modicum of rest with their feeding. If you have the leisure look around and try and take count of the people; all sorts, all sizes. I am afraid some of these young dandies are rather going to the bad. They exchange glances, and there was half-intelligible allusions to 'sprees' of the night before. Many there are—an increasing number, it appears to me—with bright intelligent pleasant faces, men with whom you would like to shake hands. Then there is, but severer, a man like the old Cheeryble. You may often make a physiognomical study of a face. You soon pick out the lawyers; the parsons—there are not many of them—still signalize themselves at the board. There is a man, who is a 'promoter of companies'—if ever a face wore an expression of grasping selfishness, it is that face: he shows it in his way of feeding, and his history, when you come to hear it, corresponds. There is a great banker; I wonder why he is here rather than in his private room; ditto that brace of clerks from a government office. And so on, most men showing their histories in their countenances, and showing their habits by their manners.

The oyster shops form a set of luncheon bars by themselves; but there is a considerable variety on some of the counters. Pickled salmon and soused mackerel appear to be the favourite delicacies; cold hard-boiled eggs, which, I should think, would be useful, and cold sole, which seems a mysterious taste; lobsters, lobster salad, &c. These bars frequently do not serve drinks, but there is generally an immense display of aerated waters, and the waiter will get you anything you want for your money. I suppose, under such circumstances, there is a friendly sort of arrangement between the luncheon bar and the public house round the corner. It is astonishing what a capacity is occasionally developed for shell fish. A gentleman told me that he would turn in and take a cool lobster, not as a meal nor yet as a part of a meal, but as a mere whet to one's appetite. The proper thing is to take your penny loaf and a pat of butter and consume natives. The Whitstable oysters will take their price, but very good oysters at a very fair price are obtainable in the west country. I know that in the bay of Tenby—always noted for good and cheap fish—one can get oysters at three shillings the long hundred of six score, the retail price. The fish which is sold retail at sixpence a pound is sold wholesale at fourpence a pound. I should think this would be a profit, or say a small advance on this, that would fairly repay the London salesman. It is rather hard that we should have to pay a penny or three halfpence for the oyster that sells for about a farthing—four or six hundred per cent. It would almost be a due punishment to the oyster seller if the great Dando institution were revived. Did you ever hear of Dando? He was the terror of the luncheon bars of his day. A gentleman with an insatiable desire of oysters and imperfect pecuniary means to gratify the taste. This, however, formed no impediment to Dando. His idea of oysters was that of Christopher North—'five hundred in their cradles and five hundred with pepper and vinegar.' This was not an outrageous joke of

Wilson's, but a veritable fact. He could act wondrous things in his day—pour a bottle of whisky into a bowl of milk and drink off the mixture. But to return to Dando. He would have the oysters opened, dozen after dozen, and enjoy them with real gusto. The men would be kept incessantly to the work of opening oysters until that insatiable appetite was, if not satisfied, wearied out. When the reckoning was made, Dando confessed impecuniosity. It might happen that he would be sent to gaol to work out the price that way; but the irrepressible Dando would crop up again. Pleasant and courteous, he would enter some new lunch bar and order a few dozen natives. The direction, pleasant to shopkeepers, to keep on opening till further notice was given. Then suddenly the thought would flash across the mind of the unhappy shopman, 'Suppose this should be Dando!' The agony of suspense was soon ended by the certainty that that great original was before him, and had, as usual, suspended cash payments.

Yet I confess it is not pleasant to stand at a counter on a rough winter day, with a door open or ajar, or, at all events, letting in some current of cold, and perhaps sleet and snow as well. There is generally a coffee-room behind, involving some slight addition to the charge, and the waiter perhaps expects a trifle. And though our insular ugliness has nothing to show that will compare with the *déjeuner à la fourchette* which you may have for two francs at the Palais Royal, with large, cheerful rooms, sofas, and gilded mirrors, and an outlook on a broad, planted space, where perhaps a fine military band is playing, still you may eat at your leisure, like a gentleman, instead of being fed at a sort of trough, like an animal—take a glance at the 'Times,' 'trifle with the cruet,' be tolerably warm and comfortable, and in some sensible places you can also obtain spiced ale or mulled claret. And this reminds me that there are some luncheon bars where the bar is everything and the luncheon nothing. You see the announcement that it is a luncheon

bar. You enter. Drink is going on everywhere, and there is no food except hard biscuits and fossilized sandwiches. There are better places, where they profess to give you drink, inasmuch as their fluid is a speciality, but still they will condescend to your weakness if you are really hungry and would like to have a little lunch. Such is Piodéla's, in the Strand, where they sell you Spanish wines, genuine and good, iced in summer and mulled in winter. Such are the new shops which they have opened for the lager beer, in some of which you have good German cookery, where do not forget the herring-salad. It is a curious fact that the places which do a supper trade do not fall into the way of a lunch business. One o'clock at night harmonizes ill with one o'clock in the morning. They will try and make you as comfortable as possible, be civil and obliging, and all that; but the attendants are tired, the room is tawdry, the atmosphere is still overcharged. I went the other day to a place to lunch where I had had supper some fifteen years before. How quaint and ghostly those empty boxes looked, where, in those old days, with merry friends, scattered and gone, in a blaze of light and amid a gauzy crowd, we went in heartily for the wholesome oysters at sixpence a dozen. I left the bar and talked with a venerable waiter. Things were not now as they once were, he said. They closed early. The night customers became few. People didn't come there as they once did. But I noticed that there was a good deal of legitimate business going on, and perhaps the waiter, upon reconsideration, may take a more favourable view of things.

Eating our way on, we should say that the legal luncheons are of a highly-satisfactory nature. The gentlemen of the long robe have always exercised great discrimination, and have been justly remarkable for eating the oyster while dispensing the shells to their clients. They have a capital luncheon bar near the river at the bottom of the Temple. I forget the name at the

moment, but it is strictly a luncheon place, and they give you dishes in the French style very neatly. Close by you have those now historic hostels, the Cock, the Rainbow, and the London, and lower down the Cheshire Cheese. Tennyson has immortalized the Cock. A friend of mine has observed Tennyson, Thackeray, and Dickens all taking their chops in that low room with the sanded floor. N.B.—The stout is good here. I must mention with regret that at the 'London' one day a red mullet was not properly cooked, the liver and 'trail' having been lost in the process. I trust I shall never have to speak of such a matter again. Perhaps it was under the Short 'Company' management.

The West End luncheon bars have, I think, made a considerable improvement of late years. They cannot indeed cook a mutton-chop or a beefsteak. That interesting branch of the fine arts has never flourished west of Temple Bar. But they can do most other things very well. You can take ladies with you to Verey's, in Regent Street, and they will stop in their carriages and do their own very satisfactory luncheons in Oxford Street and elsewhere. I think Spiers and Pond deserve well of the community for the good luncheon purposes to which they have applied their Australian experiences. But you always lunch in a hurry at a *buffet*, expecting the whistle of your train. The Regent Street luncheon bars are extremely good. They now only give dinners at the Scottish Stores in Beak Street; but at the corner of Burlington Street the Messrs. Blanchard have one of the best possible luncheon bars. You stand, indeed; and the place is rather crowded; we hope to see it enlarged. But the system is excellent, the viands good, and you may make any number of observations, if you are so inclined, on life and character. You also get here that variety on which I must insist as essential to a well-planned luncheon bar. In the lower room of the Café Royal you can lunch luxuriously; but their continental system is rather complicated, and it requires

some experience before you can lunch both well and unextravagantly. But the happy union of economy and excellence is what we all profess to aim at. I am sure the luncheon bars will respect the wants of the public, but I wish the public

would respect themselves a little more. We might lunch in a more leisurely and Christianly fashion. Luncheon is substantial and serious, and man, the cooking animal, ought to rise to the dignity of the occasion.

RIDDLES OF LOVE.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEW PLANET INSISTS UPON BECOMING VISIBLE TO THE NAKED EYE.

YOU can guess tolerably well what Captain Pemberton said when May opened to him her new project. That a daughter of his should go upon the stage was not to be thought of for an instant. Poor they might be; that perhaps he could not help; but he would always remember that he was an officer and a gentleman, and that he had a duty to perform in saving his family from degradation.

Such model sentiments as these were just what might have been expected from the captain's training and turn of thought. He had never lived among people who understood the arts as professions, and who could comprehend the dramatic art as compatible with respectability—at any rate as far as its female followers were concerned. So when he had put forth what he considered to be the orthodox ideas upon the subject, and expressed them in properly commonplace terms, he was of opinion that he had performed all the duty demanded of him, and might leave results to settle themselves. Such was May's view of the case. But May did not quite know her father, and was especially uninformed as to many experiences of his past life. It so happened that the captain had been a constant playgoer in his youth, and had revered the dramatic stars of his time—the Keans and the Kembles, for instance—with great devotion. And it was further a fact that he had, during his earlier experience in the service, taken no small part in amateur performances,

and had been even considered an actor of more than average talents. To the stage indeed he had paid attention in more than one way, and it was not the fault of the dramatic art, if his manners had not been emolliated, and if they retained any naturally savage traits. Among the educated classes in this country, the men who have the least sympathy with dramatic art and artists are to be found perhaps among University dons and military officers commanding home districts who have not seen service abroad. Captain Pemberton was of course not likely to have imbibed academical austerity, and he was saved from the pipeclay view of such matters by his foreign service and the emollient process which he had undergone through his amusements. Hence he was saved also from any brutal excess of anger when May developed her plan in connection with the stage, and contented himself, as we have seen, by simply taking the conventional 'officer and gentleman' view of the case.

So it was that May did not experience by any means such a shock as she had expected in the reception of her proposal. She did not, you may be sure, forget Mrs. Grandison's two great ideas. The first she was as far as ever from entertaining, in the way of action; but she clung to the second as her sheet anchor—she saw that it held hope. And it was not her fault if she did not, during the next few days, familiarize her father with the idea of herself in the character of an actress. She

was a much cleverer girl than you have probably been able to discover as yet, and had a reserve of feminine determination, which, properly exercised, was calculated to leave a mere man, accustomed to the command simply of soldiers, without an opinion to stand on. Time after time, at such prosaic periods as breakfast or dinner, she spoke of herself—of course from a ridiculous and impossible point of view—as a *prima donna* bringing down storms of applause from overflowing audiences, impelled by a common impulse of enthusiasm. And the pictures which she suggested—insidiously, but not without their graphic force—of a great house full of men and women in tears or laughter, or both, with their bravas and their bouquets, and the final verdict which confers fame, was not without an effect—as the young lady was not slow to perceive—upon the imagination of the man of routine. And when she rushed about the room and made mimic demonstrations of what she would do in great situations he was evidently moved to admiration. And when she ceased suddenly in an exhibition of the kind—as if it were all play—and fell caressingly on his neck, the man used to command men became commanded on the spot by a woman, and felt what a delightful fate it was to have a beautiful and engaging daughter. I sincerely trust that all this time May was not merely improving herself in acting; but appearances, it must be confessed, were against her.

Certainly all this time, May, while calculating upon the effect of familiarity with the dramatic idea upon her father, was quite unprepared for its influence upon herself. Before that interview with Marie Antoinette—I mean Mrs. Grandison—May, though dreaming as only a young girl can dream, in vague visions of poetry and romance—had never associated her longings with any kind of reality, but fancied that her thoughts were for ever to be secret and have no relation to her actual life. But a few days passed in meditating upon the practical side of her aspirations, and undermining

the captain's position in the manner we have seen, caused a complete transformation of her own being. She was no longer the subdued—if self-possessed—young lady who had appealed to Mrs. Grandison for pupils. A new world was opened to her imagination—a new sphere in which she sought to shine as a star. She was not, of course, carried away by flattery, but Mrs. Grandison's praises had produced an effect remarkably like the operation of that process. May, for the first time, felt ambition, and for the first time a force of will which seemed the consciousness of power. If it were not, that young lady's appearance and deportment was altogether delusive; for no person, unless contemplating greatness, and quite prepared to achieve it, has a right to look so radiant and triumphant, to assume a mien so lofty and decided, and to go about the house as if the whole world—including Brompton Row—were at her feet.

All these signs were marked by Captain Pemberton with admiration not unmingled with alarm, for he thought at times that she was possessed. But a suspicion of the truth presently came upon him, and he pronounced that she was only 'stage-struck.'

'Stage-struck!'

What a ruthless word to apply to May's dream of Poetry and Romance, Admiration and Fame, visioned in a future of Fairy Land, where ardent suns and meditative moons shone over golden shores and silver seas; and Palaces Dazzling with Light, rose on the borders of Lakes mysterious in beauty; and bright beings moved about in an atmosphere laden with the strains of music and the perfume of roses; and the Brightest Being of all came to where great harmonies arose as if from a depth, and beheld before her, bathed in ineffable radiance and glittering in gold and jewels, a Gorgeous Concourse of the Fair and Noble of the Earth; who all rose at her approach, throwing her flowers, sounding her name, and saluting her with Immortal Praises!

'Stage-struck,' indeed!

Happily May had not heard the opprobrious epithet; and pending the day when her dream would come to pass she contented herself with regarding the house in Brompton Row as an Enchanted Castle, where an amiable King was under a spell cast upon him by an unamiable magician, the spell to be broken only when the Princess, the daughter of the King, should be able to light in the monarch's heart a nobler love than it had known—a love that could make a sacrifice.

As became an Enchanted Princess, May wandered about the house, leaving the few domestic details in which she had hitherto interfered to the faithful Leonora, who loved any accession of responsibility, and seemed to consider that it gave her a right to throw in an extra number of elephants and tigers into her bounding treatment of the stairs: she had an early inkling of what had passed between May and Mrs. Grandison, and a great idea of encouraging the design against the captain, with a vague notion, perhaps, that she would gain something by its success. I doubt not, however, that she was disinterested when she saw May in her radiant state, regarding sublunary things with lofty decision, and treading the earth with disdain; for Leonora loved intrigue for its own sake, and, other things being equal, would at any time prefer a plot to a straightforward course of action.

May was not disposed to make a confidant of the dependant. This the dependant could see plainly enough. But Leonora compelled a certain understanding with the dreaming girl one morning when taking away the breakfast things. Captain Pemberton had afforded the opportunity by an early departure from home.

'Let the captain see Mrs. Grandison,' insinuated Leonora to May, almost in a whisper.

Leonora disappeared immediately afterwards with the tray. But the hint was not lost upon May, who, I am afraid, was getting crafty beyond her years. So at least may be surmised from the fact, that the young lady soon after sought Mrs.

Grandison in her little boudoir, and was then and there closeted with that ornament to the stage for the space of at least three quarters of an hour.

The interview may have had nothing to do with what followed—upon that point you may form your own impression—but this I know: that on the following morning Mrs. Grandison sent up to Captain Pemberton requesting the favour of a few minutes' conversation.

You can have seldom seen a man more surprised than the captain when he received the message.

'What can the woman want with me?' he said to May when Leonora had left the room.

His daughter of course had no idea—I am afraid that May's moral tone was undergoing a process of declension.

'Something connected with the rooms, perhaps,' suggested the young lady, in an artless manner; 'there was a suggestion about a new arrangement when the month had expired.'

'I detest having to transact business with a woman,' said the captain, 'but I suppose you would be of no use, May.'

'I am afraid not, papa,' replied that young lady, quietly; 'you know that nothing that I could do would be conclusive.'

'I suppose not,' rejoined the captain—bored but amiable. 'But I have never yet seen this star of the stage, and would rather have nothing to do with her.'

'Papa, that is unkind,' suggested May, in her simplest manner; 'Mrs. Grandison is a delightful person to talk to, and you of all others would be charmed with her.'

The captain could not choose but consent to be charmed; so he descended the stairs, and meeting Leonora on his way, bounding upwards as if she were a charge of cavalry and mistook him for an infantry square, intimated to that energetic young person his desire to seek the presence of her mistress.

The energetic young person was all complaisance, and came to a halt just in time to prevent an instinctive demonstration on the part of

the captain to prepare for cavalry. 'She would take him to madame immediately—madame was in her boudoir.'

And thither the captain followed; and there he was introduced to Mrs. Grandison in due course. Mrs. Grandison was upon this occasion not merely Marie Antoinette; she was the Magnanimous Queen, the Gracious Grand Duchess, and half a dozen commanding characters comprised in one. Captain Pemberton was simply a helpless man, who could command only soldiers. He felt himself unequal to the contest that ensued. It was a pitched battle as far as forms were concerned; for the captain marshalled his forces, as in honour bound, made the most of them, and resisted the charges of the enemy with all the conventional weapons at his command. But he felt the inferiority of his resources almost as soon as engaged, and then came the usual consequences—want of confidence and rapid demoralization. The captain was but a 'smooth bore' in talk. He had an antagonist supplied with Sniders, Armstrong guns, and arms of unerring precision, which met him at every turn. So when he found himself beaten at all points he had to consider what was to be done. Running away from a lady was out of the question. He already felt the force of his antagonist's tongue, and regarding her in all the degrees of her demonstrations—the Magnanimous Queen and the Gracious Grand Duchess, Marie Antoinette, in every phase of fascination—he came at last to the chivalrous conclusion that he must yield. All was lost save honour—man could do no more than he had done.

The ultimate agreement between the high contracting parties was that Captain Pemberton consented to his daughter going on the stage, and that Mrs. Grandison promised to get her an engagement.

CHAPTER XIV.

WINDSOR'S HOTEL, AND WHO WENT TO IT.

It is possible to live for a long time in London without making the acquaintance of Windsor's Hotel. I know many persons who have passed the whole of their lives in the metropolis without arriving at this experience. If you happen to be a bishop, or a peer of any importance, or a judge of one of her Majesty's courts at Westminster, or a field marshal in the army, or even some such thing as a merchant-prince—if you happen, in fact, to belong to any class whose members are, through their years and dignity, compelled to have respect for appearances, you are not likely to be recommended, upon coming to town, to stay at Windsor's. But it is very possible that, passing the place by accident, the bishop may remember how, when an undergraduate at Oxford, he stayed at Windsor's during an occasional sojourn in the metropolis; and the temporal peer, the judge, the field marshal, and the merchant-prince—though the latter is least likely of any—may, when reminded in the same manner, recall a former period, seen through the mist of time, when they also knew the house under similar conditions. Not, however, that any former frequenters of Windsor's are known to have arrived at such great dignities or positions. The probabilities are, indeed, the other way, and I merely note the possibility to show the kind of men who were, and perhaps still are, the principal patrons of the establishment.

Windsor's is situated in a street running out of Piccadilly, not a hundred miles from the Circus, and it is a place of as little outward pretension as the most fastidious person could desire. It scarcely seems, judging by its appearance from the street, to be entitled to the dignified title of an hotel; and indeed a great part of its business is of a miscellaneous restaurant character, unconnected with residence. The latter department was developing considerably when I last saw the place; but there is a coffee-room on the

left of the hotel entrance which is assigned to persons staying in the house, though even this is shared to a considerable extent by others who have known the place in that character.

At the time of which I write—only a few years ago, as my readers will remember—the fashionable season had just come to a close, and the parliamentary session had followed it with its usual punctuality. Everybody who had not left town was leaving it as fast as possible. The double fact, however, made no difference, as yet at any rate, to Windsor's. The house was only nearly full, that was all, instead of being quite full, as it had been for some months past. For the frequenters of Windsor's were not fashionable men in the sense associated with the great world, though they were leading spirits of the little world—the inner or outer world, which shall I call it?—the only world they cared about, or that cared about them.

It was at about twelve o'clock in a day to which I especially refer, that a gentleman who was evidently a dweller in the halls of Windsor—judging from the fact that he came down stairs without hat or gloves, and in a lounging way suggestive of slippers—entered the coffee-room aforesaid, seated himself at a side table, took possession of a breakfast apparently dedicated to him, and after a growl of disgust, by way of grace, at the grilled fowl which greeted him on the removal of the principal cover, proceeded to make acquaintance with the meal.

The breakfaster was a well-dressed, comely gentleman, of military appearance—but it may save description if I say that he bore a striking resemblance to the friend of Mr. Hargreave, who had made a brief appearance in Shuttleton society a couple of months before, and it will save further trouble if I add that he was Cecil Halidame himself.

The only other occupant of the room was an older, not to say middle-aged, man, of still more military appearance than Captain Halidame, that is to say, more severe, and with a peculiar appearance

which said half-pay, as plainly as it proclaimed from the housetops. He was varying his breakfast with such literary recreation as could be afforded by one of the half-dozen Army Lists; which were the only books, except University Calendars, Racing Calendars, some numbers of 'Baily's Magazine,' and a 'Guide to Cheltenham,' to be found in the apartment.

Halidame saluted this gentleman with an unceremonious nod, and then looked round him for something to read. A few papers were lying about. He tried 'Bell's Life,' and he tried the 'Army and Navy Gazette,' he tried the 'Times' of that morning. None of these would do. He could not fix his attention, and had evidently something on his mind. Judging by his frequent glances at the door, it seemed that he expected a visitor.

This was just what he did expect, and the visitor presently appeared. He opened the coffee-room door without any previous appeal with the waiter, and came in as if he knew the house.

He was a short, thick-set man, with a magenta-coloured countenance not unsuggestive of port, nor irrelevant to cognac, nor indeed to any refreshment of the kind that might come handy. He was shaved to a miracle, and, when he removed his hat, looked, as far as his face and head were concerned, and making allowance for a few features, like a red billiard-ball with a circle of iron-grey hair around that portion of it intended to be uppermost.

He greeted Halidame familiarly, but still in a manner which indicated a certain social subservience; and an acute observer might very soon guess the relation which he bore to that gentleman—that of a kind of dependant friend, who looked after business for him which he was too lazy to look after himself.

'True to my time, captain, you see,' remarked the new comer, as he dropped into a chair by Halidame's side, and marked the business character of his visit by drawing out a bundle of letters from the breast pocket of a carefully-brushed, but not very new coat.

"He was *not* true to his time, I suspect, for the captain gave a growl which distinctly conveyed such an impression.

'Well, never mind that, Hanger,' he said, hurriedly. 'What have you done?'

'What have I *not* done?' was the response. 'I have been to Benjamin, and he says he'll wait; I have been to Abednego, and he says *he'll* renew.'

Cecil Halidame gave a gasp as if relieved by these communications.

'And after that,' pursued Mr. Hanger, with a certain severity discouraging to sanguine emotions, 'I went to Jamerack, whose conduct was simply beastly.'

'Tell me, tell me!' said Cecil, with moody impatience.

'Well,' continued Mr. Hanger, 'he simply won't do anything—that is to say in the way of waiting. He says—shall I tell you what he *did* say?'

'Go on, go on.'

'He said, then, that you were a downright *do*, who never paid anybody; that he had had quite enough of your promises, and did not believe in your expectations; and that he meant to sell you up, and see what you were worth immediately. He has a judgment already, as *you* know.'

'Yes, yes. Go on. How about the advance?'

'Well, I'm sorry to say that Jowls is just as unpleasant as any of them. He says he'd rather not do any more in the same way, at least without another name. He didn't seem to consider mine as mattering one way or the other,' added Mr. Hanger, with a rather humorous twinkling of the eye.

'Did he mention anybody else's name?' asked Cecil.

'He said your brother's might do.'

'Confound him! As if I could ask Norman. You might have told him that my brother would do nothing of the kind—an absurd principle to stand upon, considering all the money he has *given* me,' added Cecil, evidently disgusted at the inconsistency involved.

'After that,' continued Hanger, taking no notice of this reflection,

'I went to Jorrock; and after Jorrock I went to Scammell, and then——'

'Well, never mind all that,' interrupted Halidame, petulantly. 'Did you do any good?'

'Devil a bit,' summed up Mr. Hanger. 'They all say that if you sold your commission to-morrow you could not pay a tenth part of your debts, so they decline to do any business. It's rather hard, considering that the money market is so easy, and people in the City are at their wits' end for investments.'

Halidame relieved his feelings by using bad language.

'What's to be done then?' he said, savagely, and glaring at Hanger, as if the difficulty was *his* doing.

'Don't know, my boy,' said that gentleman, calmly, and growing independent, as he always did in proportion to his friend's impecuniosity.

'Upon my word, Hanger,' said Halidame, seeking an object for wrath, 'you are more annoying to me than all of my creditors put together. You seem to take a delight in my troubles.'

Hanger was used, apparently, to this kind of petulance, for he made no remark, and the conversation flagged unpleasantly.

Then there was a pause, during which Halidame finished his breakfast fiercely, as if the grilled fowl was a creditor and he was clearing accounts with him in a very decided manner. Then giving a parting taste to his coffee, which he pronounced awfully bad, he called for some curaçoa.

The last demonstration was a touch of nature which made the whole world kin—to the extent, at least, of Mr. Hanger, who sympathized with Halidame's distress as if it were his own, and partook of its solace with similar consideration.

There was a little interruption at this juncture, caused by a couple of Cambridge undergraduates who had come down and ordered breakfast, pending the appearance of which they had made more immediate demands for brandy and soda water, and bitter ale. These refreshments they consumed miscellaneously, sup-

plying the place of further excitement by indulging in a strain of badinage at the expense of the half-pay officer, who had concluded his breakfast, but was still deriving mental food from his favourite 'Hart.'

The object of their attention took the pleasantries in very good part, though he said something about youngsters, and alluded to fabulous ways in which he would make them repent if he had them as his subalterns. But the greatest fun, it presently appeared, was inspired by an absent person. The nature of the entertainment was first made manifest when the waiter entered the room with Captain Halidame's curaçoa.

'I say, Charles,' cried undergraduate No. 1, 'how is Grampus now?'

'He don't seem at all well, sir,' answered the waiter, with a look as if he meant to say that he was as much amused at the absent person's condition as was consistent with common decency in one of his class.

'Will he be down to breakfast this evening?' asked undergraduate No. 2, as if anxious for information.

'Can't say, sir,' said the waiter, still undemonstrative; 'but I dare say his things will be dry in time.'

There was a roar of laughter from the two young gentlemen at this response, which caused Mr. Hanger to ask what was the matter.

It turned out that Major Grampus was what the waiter called 'an eccentric gentleman,' who never got up until seven o'clock in the evening, when he appeared in the coffee-room dressed with scrupulous care, read the morning papers, partook of a light breakfast, and then sallied forth to spend the day, having previously provided himself with a couple of sovereigns—the sum was never varied—from Mr. Windsor, who had charge of his funds. He returned home at about eight in the morning, never interfering with anybody or occasioning the slightest trouble. The undergraduates, it further appeared, having been spending the evening in their own way, did not return until Major Grampus had just retired; and feeling un-

usually festive, they indulged in various practical jokes at the major's expense—the mildest of the said jokes being comprised in drawing his mattress into the middle of the room and overturning his bath upon it, and the strongest in taking every article of his wardrobe they could find—their victim at this period being undressed—and placing them for safety in a cistern at the top of the house.

There was great hilarity, as you may suppose, when these facts came out; but no suggestion was made as to any impropriety in the proceedings, which were quite common to Windsor's, an hotel frequented, as I have intimated, by young men of all periods of life. It was a chief charm of Windsor's, in fact, that the people of the house never interfered with their guests. Had one of the latter chosen to have his bath filled with mock turtle in the morning, and to take his washing soap in the form of cutlets with his dinner, he would have met with no remonstrance on account of the exceptional nature of his tastes. A jocular gentleman—usually military—would now and then come in during the afternoon and seek a vent for his confined emotions in a revolution of the entire coffee-room, obtained by piling all the furniture into a heap in the centre. The waiter, when his attention was called to the fact, never failed to restore the articles to their proper places in time for dinner, but nobody was so ill-bred as to make a remark upon the subject. Such proceedings were considered simply incidental at Windsor's. To do Windsor's justice, however, Windsor, who was as gay an old boy as any of the young boys who came to the house, put the eccentricities into the bill; not in the form of separate items, which would have been low, but no less surely for all that, for his compensations pervaded the document and distinguished it from other documents of the kind as a certain style may pervade a literary composition and distinguish it from that of other authors. In its own way you could no more mistake the fine Roman hand of Windsor than you

could mistake the hands of Macanlay or Carlyle.

Halidame and Hanger, as you may suppose, took as tolerant a view of the present proceeding as anybody else, and I dare say got their share of amusement out of it; though there are periods in a man's life, and especially if pecuniary embarrassment exercises an engrossing influence, when he does not take the same enjoyment as usual in the annoyance of other people, and when he is apt to find even the 'drawing' of a half-pay major on the verge of delirium tremens not so intensely humorous a diversion as it had seemed in happier days.

I write, of course, from the point of view generally entertained at Windsor's, where the ruling manners had the geniality and impetus of Spring; and when Spring is accustomed to have everything her own way, you may be sure that she will not be intruded upon by the more sober seasons without giving them a little taste of her quality.

The arrival of the undergraduates' breakfast—a wonderful breakfast it was in the way of inclusiveness—caused a few 'flashes of silence' in the conversation of those gentlemen, and during these pleasant intervals Halidame and his companion continued their conversation about the former's affairs. The latter's affairs, by-the-way, were in a still worse condition; but Mr. Hanger had dealt in smaller transactions, and did not aspire to the dignity of having a dependent friend to look after them. He was by profession a solicitor, but had been unfortunate, not only with his own money but other people's; had lost his business accordingly, and saw so little chance of renewing it, that for some time past he had not troubled himself to take out the annual certificate necessary for the practice of his calling. For a short period he obtained employment as managing clerk with a firm that discounted bills, or rather—as they put it—had clients who were not unwilling to give that accommodation; and in transactions of this kind Mr. Hanger was found of great use, owing to the extensive connec-

tion which it had always been his privilege to enjoy with gentlemen belonging to the services, sporting gentlemen, and gentlemen of independent position—all that large class, in fact, who find favour with money-lenders through the combination of certainly wanting money and being presumably able to repay it. But though he brought some valuable business to the office, and was worth his salary so far, it was found after a time that he had been in the habit of exacting commissions on his own account besides those allowed him by the firm. A natural jealousy was the consequence, heightened by possible injury to the character of the office; so Mr. Hanger got his discharge. He did not seek another engagement, arriving at the philosophical conclusion that a man who has no situation cannot be turned out of it, and may at least make as much money as he can. So armed with this glorious privilege he set to work, and making use of his old connections, got them accommodation whenever he could and disappointed them punctually whenever he was disappointed himself. He did not disdain any other business that turned up, in connection with companies and speculations generally in the City, and, directly or indirectly, with the Turf. He was also prepared to be agent for anything or anybody that was available, and by dint of a great deal of sharpness and no little industry, managed to maintain, with a considerable degree of respectability, his position as a ruined man.

For Cecil Halidame Mr. Hanger did not do business in a strictly business way. No commissions or per-centages passed between them. The two were very old acquaintances—Hanger said friends, by the way, and in the confidences inspired by his brandy and water—which confidences were always to be had when the brandy and water was—would tell you that he had known little Cecil since he was 'so high,' alluding to the table, and had passed his life in conferring incalculable benefits upon him and his family. The latter position might be open to question; but there was plainly a

great deal of intimacy between the pair; and Hanger was always too chivalrous to reduce any transaction between them to the level of what he called contemptuously 'a commercial transaction.' So he contented himself with working for his friend in the way we have seen, limiting his requests to an occasional 'fiver' when there was a little cash afloat—periods, by-the-way, becoming more and more rare in the life of the Hussar—and consoling himself meanwhile with the chances of his friend's society, to which was added the serene satisfaction of being entertained with gratuitous refreshments to a comprehensive extent—ranging from the premeditated dinner to the casual drink.

The undergraduates were finishing their breakfast as Halidame and Hanger finished their conversation, and the only flashes of silence were now on the side of the latter. Halidame did not seem to have arrived at a very hopeful result, for he summed up by saying—

'Well, I dine with Wyndermere to-night, and after dinner we shall no doubt have some play. Perhaps I may be lucky for once.'

'And if you are not?' suggested his monitor for the nonce.

'Well, in that case,' rejoined Halidame, rather irritated at the plausibility being taken off his remark, 'I can't be much worse off than I am.'

As he spoke there was a noise of wheels, and a mail phaeton, drawn by a pair of handsome high-steppers, was seen drawing up at the door.

'By Jove!' exclaimed Halidame, 'it's Wyndermere himself.'

The next minute the person whom he had called Wyndermere entered the room. He was a tall, handsome man, well-built and well-dressed, and a type of a person who is obviously on the best possible terms with the world, society, and himself. His face, besides being handsome, was healthy and happy, and its bright beaming effect was assisted not a little by a clear grey eye, while dignity was provided for by a fair beard, which, keeping as it

did within modest limits, was suffered to grow as it pleased. But perhaps Mr. Wyndermere's most remarkable characteristic was the impression of extreme respectability and opulence conveyed by his person and manner. It may be doubted if anybody was ever so respectable and opulent as Mr. Wyndermere looked. To be sure, he was really a rich man, having, in addition to a private fortune, the emoluments arising from a good position in that excellently-paid service, the Civil Service of India, from which country he was at home on furlough, making the most of his youth and wealth in diversions almost worthy of the days when his predecessors the nabobs used to ring the bell and call for 'more curricles.'

'Delighted to find you within, my dear fellow,' said Mr. Wyndermere, advancing with a cheerful effusion which formed a strong contrast to the anxious, constrained look of Halidame—for a man cannot think and talk for a couple of hours about his pecuniary difficulties without carrying some effects in his face. 'I have come to pick you up, if you will go with me, continued the new comer; 'I want you to help me in choosing some jewellery. I have to spend a little fortune in a wedding present to a charming cousin of mine, and want to get all the credit I can for good taste. Do come, like a good fellow; I will drive you anywhere you please after we leave Bond Street—and you have not forgotten that you dine with me in the evening, of course.'

Halidame pulled up his face into as pleasant an expression as was possible on short notice. And five minutes afterwards, when he mounted the mail phaeton, you would not have fancied that he had a care on his mind. Nobody, in fact, would have suspected, seeing this pair of particularly well-favoured and fortunate-looking gentlemen sitting side by side behind the high-steppers, that their fortunes were so widely dissimilar—that one had more wealth, almost, than he knew what to do with, and was without a care in the world, while the other was being hunted

about and indebted to the most abject devices for his personal safety, and with not much chance of preserving it after all.

CHAPTER XV.

CAPTAIN HALIDAME'S 'NEXT MORNING.'

Hanger called upon Halidame next morning by appointment. It was past eleven o'clock when he paid his visit, but the captain had not come down to breakfast. So Hanger took a chair in the coffee-room, and drew what moral he could from contemplating the half-pay major, who was sitting at the same table, and engaged apparently at the same breakfast, as on the preceding day: suggesting the idea that he had not moved during the past twenty-four hours, and had only changed the Army List, which was still at his elbow, for the 'Bell's Life,' which he held in his hand, having found the eloquence of Hart a little monotonous during the long vigils of the night.

The undergraduates, like the captain, had not yet descended to their morning meal, owing probably to a further exaggeration of festivity on the previous night. But the charm of their society was not quite lost to the hotel; for they might be heard from time to time bawling from distant and facetious parts of the house for seltzer and brandy, accompanying their orders with sarcastic remarks upon the inefficacy of bells, the professional shortcomings of waiters, and the moral obliquities which they observed in the character of the landlord of the house.

Their party had been increased by the presence of an ensign, temporarily released from the defence of his country at Chatham—a gentleman of tender years, but unusually vigorous views of life, who had not, perhaps, passed his drill, but was evidently 'in a mood to chide the thunder if at him it roared'—or when it did not roar, for the matter of that. His remonstrances at the tardiness of attendance, made from the top of the stairs, suggested the idea that the waiter had come under

the displeasure of the Commander-in-Chief and the Adjutant-General at least; and they were always made upon the ground of disrespect shewn to the army in general, accompanied by cutting allusions as to the probable consequences of similar conduct pursued at the mess of the speaker's particular regiment. So I need scarcely say that the ensign was a cheerful addition to the society of the place.

'Captain Halidame is not coming down but will see you upstairs,' said the waiter, presently entering the room and replying to Mr. Hanger's message.

So Mr. Hanger ascended to a room on the second floor, where a spectacle awaited him which few men about town could have beheld without emotion.

There was nothing the matter with the bedchamber, which was a pleasant apartment enough, spacious, and rescued from some of the gloom inherent to a thorough sleeping room by the introduction of looking-glasses on the walls, and articles of general furniture, indicating that it might be made habitable by day as well as by night. But its occupant—he was a sad spectacle indeed.

Captain Halidame was still in bed; and if any gentleman disinclined to get up wanted a lesson as to possible appearances under such conditions, he would be able to draw any amount of moral from the spectacle which presented itself. Few men look well when they stay in bed in the morning. Even when they have retired to rest early the night before, and wake up in a room with open casements admitting the fresh air of the country, the songs of birds, and all the welcome noises of nature, they have at least but an invalidish air about them—granting, too, that they are themselves in an average state of health and contentment. But when they wake from their slumbers in a London room, with no trees, and nothing but house-tops visible from the windows; no sounds coming therefrom but such as come from London sparrows and London cries; and they are themselves in a jaded state from late

hours and excitement, and have troubles on their minds besides of a secret character, they are no enviable spectacles to the most envious of their friends. So thought Hanger as he looked upon the prostrate Halidame, and saw from his friend's appearance, as he afterwards said, that there was a great deal more the matter with him than usual.

Cecil Halidame—the handsome, the gay, the caressed, the spoiled child of society, and the beloved of beautiful women not only in Europe but in Asia—looked about as pleasant a spectacle as a gentleman who is going to be hanged. Seedy would be a very mild and ineffectual word by which to describe him. He was pale and worn, dishevelled and distressed, and, you might well suppose, despairing. He looked, of course, all the worse for want of that attention to the business of the toilet without which we are none of us presentable for many hours together; but there was no mistaking the fierce passion which had taken possession of his face, in which was exhibited alternate emotions of rage and what seemed something like remorse.

As Hanger entered the room Cecil roused himself, evidently glad to be relieved from his own society.

'I am very pleased to see you,' he said, with a sad smile. 'I am in a very bad way this morning, Hanger, and shall bore you awfully.'

Hanger smiled too—rather grimly. He was not unused to being bored by his friend, and rebelled at times; but he was always good for Cecil's service in case of real necessity, and might be counted upon like a man's mother when nobody else will come near him.

'I am afraid it's all up with me,' pursued Halidame. 'You know what a hole I was in yesterday. Well, that was a state of prosperity compared with my present condition. I must leave London immediately—England, I fear—and even if I join my regiment in India I don't see how I can escape. Common creditors I may keep off, but card debts will follow me; and the end must be that I am bullied out

of the service—out of society—out of everything,' he added, in a tone of despair.

'Then you were unlucky last night?' suggested Hanger, coming to the point.

'Unlucky!' groaned Halidame. 'I ought never to have been such an ass as to tempt my luck. But I will tell you all presently. Reach me some more seltzer and brandy.'

Halidame had been already partaking of the restorative in question, as was indicated by an empty bottle and a tumbler by his bedside. Hanger took another flask of the effervescing drink, which was placed in reserve upon the table, and with the aid of some cognac, also in waiting, prepared a fresh draught of 'the mixture as before' for his sorrowing friend.

Refreshed by the restorative, Halidame told his tale. He had dined with Mr. Wyndermere the night before, at that gentleman's club, and had played at whist afterwards until a late hour. The club was not remarkable for high play, but the work had been warm upon the occasion in question; and Halidame, after losing the few pounds which he had in his pocket, had been cleared of three hundred in addition, which he had neither in his pocket nor elsewhere.

'I have nothing to complain of,' he added, with rather sorrowful candour, 'in the conduct of any of the men. Wyndermere is no gambler. He plays but seldom, in fact; but when he does play he doesn't care how high the stakes are, and loses as contentedly as he wins. I doubt if I lost much to him last night. In fact, he was my partner several times, and, I fancy, did little more than clear himself. I owe something to him, but the greater part of the three hundred to a couple of other men. I did nothing but lose, and of course inflicted my bad luck upon every man who had the misfortune to cut in with me. We were not many hours playing, too; but you may lose a great deal at shilling points and five on the rubber, if shillings are understood to be sovereigns, and you bet besides.'

Mr. Hanger was not able to con-

trovert this position, and assented to it with a sympathising groan.

'The question is,' continued Halidame, 'how am I to pay these men? You know how little I have at Cox's, and the chance I have of raising the money from the rascals I have been using for so long.'

Mr. Hanger was obliged to be acquiescent in this particular also, and could only attempt a few words of consolation. He was blundering out these when Halidame rose in his bed, and cried aloud in an exulting tone, as if visited with sudden inspiration—

'I have it, Hanger. I will square with them this very day. I had forgotten all about it. I have property to dispose of.'

This was news to Hanger, who, after a glance at his friend in order to determine if he was mad or not, and deciding in favour of his sanity, made the practical remark—

'Well, in that case it's all right.'

'Yes, I have property to dispose of,' continued Halidame, rather fiercely, as if somebody was disputing the fact; 'and you, my boy, shall go and realize it.'

'Delighted,' replied Hanger; and he really was as pleased as a man could be at the promised relief, though rather puzzled at the sudden communication.

'Take my keys,' said Halidame, with the air of half command that he assumed towards Hanger when it so pleased him; 'look, they are upon the dressing-table.'

Hanger went to the dressing-table with disciplined obedience, and took the keys, which were beside his friend's watch. As he did so his eye caught an unaccustomed object.

'Surely, Halidame,' said he, 'you are not spending your money upon rings just now.'

'The ring there—ah! how it recalls yesterday,' replied Halidame, bitterly. 'Wyndermere gave me that. He made me go with him to help him choose about five hundred pounds of jewellery he had to give away. I gave him my advice, and he gave me that. I thought it a handsome present at the time—this morning it looks like a sarcasm.'

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The ring was a matter of no consideration in the main matter, and Halidame continued his instructions to his faithful dependant.

'You've got the keys. Just open that despatch-box on the drawers. Have you done so?' Halidame, as he regained confidence, got abrupt.

'All right,' was the submissive response.

'Well then,' pursued Halidame, 'turn out all those letters and other papers, and down at the bottom you will find an ivory box—a carved Chinese affair—give it to me, like a good fellow.'

Hanger made the search as requested, and handed a beautifully carved Chinese casket to his friend.

'You will find a key that fits it on the ring,' said Halidame; 'give it to me.'

The ring was presented. Halidame selected the key, and was about to apply it to the box, when he started, as if with some sudden emotion, and said abruptly—

'Never mind; you will see the thing when you get to the jeweller's. There is the key. Go, like a good fellow, to Golconda's—I think that will be the best place, as they know me, and saw me about so late as yesterday. Go to Golconda's, I say, and sell the thing for what you can get—you will get, I dare say, as much as I want.'

Hanger began to think that his friend had gone crazy; but as a prudent man he did not express such an opinion; so, after receiving instructions to pay away the money if he received it, and making an appointment for a meeting in the course of the afternoon, he went forth upon his mission.

Cecil Halidame, left to himself, felt the relief which comes to a man when he has met a cause of anxiety by a decisive step. It was a painful one, for he was disposing of property which he was evidently ill-disposed to spare; but it would help him out of his present difficulty, and that was all he dared to think about. His thoughts truly were not pleasant companions. Yesterday he was bewailing his fate as the victim of tailors, bill-dis-

counters, and army agents with whom he had overdrawn accounts. He was ruthlessly dunned, he was being sued at law, and he was even in danger of immediate arrest. But his difficulties, though great, were at least of an ordinary character. The contest with men of business was at any rate fair fighting, and Halidame did not dream of there being any harm in keeping such people out of their money as long as possible, with just a little risk perhaps of never paying them at all. It was the rascals' business to wait, he considered, and in this peculiar branch of industry it must be said that he gave them a great deal of employment. If waiting can be considered an active operation, they need never have been idle.

Regarded, then, in this philosophic light, his condition yesterday was one of positive happiness compared with that in which he found himself to-day, when philosophy could be of no avail against the actual fact. Still, as I have said, he had a feeling of relief; and he had long since learned from experience that familiarity with misfortunes of most kinds, like familiarity with danger or physical pain, produces the same effect that familiarity with persons is said to produce—by a particularly vulgar and lying proverb.

Perhaps it was this feeling of relief that made Halidame dress himself with peculiar care, and pay attention even to such additional decorations as the little bouquet for his buttonhole which he found ready for him on the dressing-table—supplied by regular arrangement with a fashionable florist. Perhaps it was the same feeling that made him luxuriously and even festively inclined, and mentally determine to try and make up a party to go and dine at the Star and Garter. But there was just a little desperation in his state of mind, and his head was not quite settled after the wine and excitement of the previous night; and he had that vague sense of impending calamity which comes over a man on the morning after excess, so that his condition

may be easily accounted for. What he felt to want was a thorough change of scene and society, to distract him from his own thoughts. Female companionship always had upon him the effect of a stimulant, and brought his mental powers into play; and he felt disposed to dissipate in this manner by paying visits at the pleasantest houses he knew. But on the other hand he dreaded restraint, and required to be among people to whom he could talk to please himself rather than to please them. To a great extent, you see, he did not know what he wanted; and it was precisely in this mood that after a phantom breakfast—it was not much more corporeal than a cup of green tea and an anchovy toast—that he sallied forth from Windsor's into the world.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE 'NEXT MORNING' BRINGS AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

It was 'a confoundedly fine day,' to use the words of the half-pay major whom Halidame left brooding as usual in the coffee-room. That officer always spoke in insulting terms of Nature when she happened to be in a better humour than himself; but upon Halidame the weather exercised its legitimate influence. Beauty in any form never failed to raise his animal spirits. A pretty woman, he had been heard to say, had in a few minutes the effect upon him of a pint of champagne, and got into his head, as I have hinted, in much the same manner. He fancied rather too frequently that she got into his heart also; but the latter process is not effected with equal facility, and the fact is very fortunate for a great many of us, who would otherwise find the residence in question encumbered with too many tenants. The head is a much safer seat for the affections, and a little excess there cures itself in a very short time. There is no need, however, to moralise. All I meant to mention was that Cecil Halidame, being a little disturbed in his head, exp-

rienced probably a languid sense of some luxurious ideal—a vague sentiment which sunshine and flowers would be sufficient to satisfy—and that the bright weather exhilarated him accordingly. He felt the sunshine in his blood, and his thoughts transported themselves to the beauties of nature beyond the town, with just a little more attention than usual perhaps to beauty of another kind which passed him from time to time, and induced him, by force of association, I suppose, to commit the frailty of looking at such things as bonnets in shop-windows. To tell the truth, he felt light and frivolous to any extent, and very much in the mood which leads a man of his temperament to find a resource—failing any other—in going about purchasing jewellery, gloves, perfumes, and all sorts of foolish and feminine things. All this, I dare say, sounds very sad; but I am obliged to write of Captain Halidame as he was, and not as he ought to have been.

Seldom has a gentleman, even 'about town,' passed a less profitable hour than that passed by Cecil Halidame while meditating, or rather dreaming, of what he should do for the day; his only engagement being the one which he had made with Hanger in reference to the financial affair. He did not care to go to his club; he had not seen a morning paper, and took not the smallest interest in its possible contents; and the questions of the quidnuncs would have driven him to distraction.

It is recorded of a statesman of past times that after ten minutes or so of provocation he once seized a bore by the throat and shook him violently, declaring that 'human nature could endure it no longer.' Such would have been the inevitable fate of old Colonel Proser at the hands of Halidame if that harassing officer had asked his usual question of 'What do you think about Russia now?' Major Buttonhole, who told people that he was kept awake all night by the Emperor of the French, and had always some fresh plan for dealing with that inscrutable monarch, would

scarcely have escaped with his life. Little Tattle, who told everything about everybody in private life, and a little more, if possible, about everybody in public life, and had usually a reserve of scandal about crowned heads, would have fared better; for he usually killed his victims for purposes of self-defence by talking them into an abject state of idiocy.

With a keen appreciation of the powers of Proser, Buttonhole, and Tattle, and those of others who, in a military club, would be certain to talk military shop, Halidame's instincts told him that the place was no place for him in his present state of mind; so he wandered without purpose about the streets, and disported himself in the frivolous manner I have mentioned.

He did not indulge in the little extravagances to which, as I have said, men of the kind have a tendency under similar conditions, for ready money, as has been profoundly remarked, is a great check upon the imagination, and credit, as we have seen, was not Halidame's strong point just then. Not that he would have cared much about the disposition of his immediate resources—I mean those in his pocket—for as he said of himself, 'he was always an expensive fellow when he was hard up,' and did not see the advantage gained when disbursements suggested themselves instead of waiting to be suggested, by having five pounds about him instead of having nothing at all. So a dinner or lunch *de luxe*, or any object of similar importance, seldom became a matter of calculation with him; and with the smallest prospect of fair pecuniary weather, he was always found sailing with the breeze. He would have indulged his tastes a great deal more, I dare say, but for the rebukes of his friend Hanger, who ventured, in his capacity of confidant, to be a stern monitor at times, and, having what may be considered a selfish interest in Cecil's hotel extravagances, did not scruple to condemn the employment of ready money for other purposes as 'diverting expenditure from its legitimate channel.'

Only in one instance did Halidame

dame, during this 'next morning' of his, depart from the sturdy principle laid down by his friend. While ungratefully killing time which spared him under somewhat severe provocation, he happened to examine the pictures in the window of a photographer in Regent Street, regarding with pardonable interest the portraits of lovely ladies in piquant costumes which the theatres seem to have legitimatised as objects of public attention, when he remembered on a sudden that he had a commission to execute at some place of the kind on the part of a no less important person than himself.

The fact was, as soon transpired when he made known his requirement to the shopman, he had been carrying about with him, for more than a couple of months, a photograph *carte de visite* in an envelope, and as envelopes under such conditions are likely to wear out and look ugly, if they do not get lost, and are at best but a mean receptacle for a possible treasure, Halidame bethought him that he would like a case of some description more worthy to hold the contents. As he wished to have the picture fitted in and protected by glass, he was naturally obliged to produce the work of nature and art in question; and as the photographer's assistant had to seek some mechanical means and appliances for the purpose, the latter was obliged to take the case and its contents away with him to the upper part of the house.

He was absent ten minutes or more, during which time Halidame prowled about the place in a high state of impatience, and but ill-disposed to be amused with the interesting objects which courted his inspection on the tables and walls. The man came down at last, looking apologetic and somewhat perplexed.

'I am very sorry, sir,' he said; 'afraid you will think I have taken a liberty, but really did not intend. Fact is, sir, I left the picture on the table while I went to get some cement, and a lady who is having her portrait taken took up the case and looked inside.'

Halidame did not wish the picture to be seen by strangers, but he

would not resent so trifling a freedom on the part of a lady, so he merely answered hurriedly—

'Well, I suppose you could not help it, and no harm is done, I dare say. Give me the case—I am in a hurry.'

'Well, I must tell you, too, sir,' said the man, 'that the lady took the picture, saying that it was the portrait of a friend of hers whom she wished to find out in London, and she positively refused to give it back until she had seen the gentleman who had brought it. A young gentleman who is with her—a young officer who has had his regimentals sent here to be taken in—said she must not detain the case or send any message about it to a stranger; but she said she didn't care, and would do precisely as she pleased; and the officer said well, he couldn't help it.'

'And I dare say he couldn't,' said Halidame, amused despite his annoyance at this piece of feminine persistency. Then a sudden idea struck him.

'It is not—not the lady herself?' he asked. 'You did not recognise—?'

Then he paused, remembering that the original of the picture was not quite the person to disport herself in such dictatorial style. And the man, too, quickly answered—

'Oh, no, sir, not the least.'

'And do you know the name of the officer?'

'Manton, sir; Ensign Frank Manton,—th Royals—saw it on his uniform-case.'

Halidame did not know the name, and was not pleased to stand confessed as the possessor of the portrait to a stranger; but there seemed to be no help for it, especially as the man added—

'I don't think you will get the picture, sir, unless you will not object to go up stairs, for the lady is rather—rather arbitrary—if I may say so, and orders the gentleman about. I think she must be his cousin, sir.'

Halidame did not quite see the sequence, but decided to go and claim his property.

The portrait-room was, as usual,



Drawn by Adelaide Claxton.]

MRS. MANTON TELLS 'ALL ABOUT IT.'

[See 'Riddles of Love,' p. 261.



at the top of the house; and there, arrayed in Her Majesty's immaculate scarlet, and sitting in an arm-chair, with his head screwed into a piece of machinery which gave him the appearance of awaiting the extraction of a tooth, sat a gentleman of martial bearing beyond his years and stature. In the farther corner of the room, looking at some pictures, stood a young lady whose first appearance conveyed the impression—justified by subsequent examination—that she was very decidedly dressed, and might have gone to a fancy ball as an epitome of 'the period,' as far as female costume was concerned. She turned as she heard the sound of footsteps, and revealed the merry eyes and delightfully-dimpled countenance of Miss Lucy Cartwright.

Halidame was pleased besides being relieved, though for a moment—as if a sudden recollection had come upon him—he seemed agitated, and his face wore a painful expression.

The latter signs seemed, however, unobserved by Lucy, who raised a cry of genuine pleasure, quite unjustified by the extent of her acquaintance with Halidame—but you know what a gushing thing she was.

'Miss Cartwright,' said Halidame, advancing and extending his hand, 'this is an unexpected pleasure.'

'And I am very glad to see you too,' she said, frankly; 'but you must not call me Miss Cartwright.'

'Well, Lucy, then,' said Halidame, who was never wanting in affability to a lady, and fancied that she must have taken more interest in him than he had supposed, when at Shuttleton.

'Oh, that will never do,' said the young lady, giving her words a few bars of accompaniment with one of her musical laughs; 'that will never do. What would you say, Frank?'—appealing to the young officer, who had been posed by the photographer and was afraid to move, and did not seem prepared to venture even upon using his tongue. But without waiting for him the fair speaker added—

'You must call me Mrs. Ensign Manton.'

This declaration forced a remonstrance from the constrained gentleman in the chair.

'Do for heaven's sake say Mrs. Manton, without the Ensign,' he said, imploringly.

'Oh, I didn't know,' she said, naively; 'I didn't know, until you told me, that it wasn't right. I won't do it again—will that suit you?'

The fact, however, if not the form, was one for congratulation; so Halidame was all congratulations accordingly.

He had said several pretty things and was improvising several more, when the photographic artist entered with his materials, and after duly warning the sitter proceeded to arrange the focus.

'Come into the waiting-room with me, while Frank is being taken,' said Mrs. Manton—I hasten to give her her new name—and I will tell you all about it.'

The helpless sitter glanced, rather anxiously as it appeared, at the retreating forms of his wife and Halidame, and I dare say was not quite pleased at the indefinite extent which the young lady's confidence proposed to take. But the artist at this instant begged him pathetically to look at a nail in the wall, and he came to 'eyes front' accordingly.

In a proper state of civilization people would have their photographs taken, as they have their teeth, under the influence of chloroform. The diversion caused the ensign to look remarkably foolish, and the photograph, as was afterwards found, was an unfortunately faithful resemblance.

Mrs. Manton had just time to tell 'all about it,' to the extent that the match was a runaway affair, and that the happy couple were, in consequence, on the worst possible terms with their respective families; that she supposed the said families would come round one of these days; and that, in the mean time, it did not matter, as she had her own money that nobody could interfere with, and that he had his pay, which wasn't much, to be sure;

with a few interesting particulars of a similar kind—when the other high contracting party to the arrangement, being released from bondage, joined them and gave a temporary turn to the revelations.

Lucy—Mrs. Manton sounds very formal—introduced her friend to her husband in due course, and the two gentlemen took up the conversation as well as they could. There was another interval of absence, however, on Mr. Manton's part, for he had to divest himself of his uniform and make himself presentable to the public before leaving the place; and then Lucy became once more characteristically communicative.

Yes, it had been a case of elopement, and admirably managed on both sides. For Lucy, under pretence of paying a visit of some weeks at the house of a schoolfellow a few miles from home, had managed to get away with all her personal baggage, a triumph which obviated a great many romantic difficulties incidental to occasions of the kind; for, as the young lady remarked, 'Going away without one's things may be very pleasant in a poem or a romance, but must be very disagreeable when the heroine sets up in private life. What, in fact, is she to do for want of them? Oh, no; we did not ride off in the young Lohengrin's style; that would have been too absurd; we simply met at the railway station, and went off quietly, having made our arrangements beforehand to be married—in quite a legal manner, you know, so that there can be no question on the subject.' The latter assertion was made with a great air of dignity.

It appeared, too, that the happy bridegroom had managed matters quite as prudently, having obtained the necessary leave, and made his exit from Shuttleton *sans peur* and *sans reproche*, and, you may be sure, not *sans* baggage.

There was one little element in the arrangement that was less romantic, perhaps, than could be flattering to the pride of the adventurous pair. Nobody pursued them. The fact seemed slightly humiliat-

ing, but less so when the circumstances are explained. Neither of the families of the high contracting parties knew of the affair until too late to interfere with practical effect; both lady and gentleman being absent upon authorized grounds. They were very happy, Lucy added, though they were at present 'cuts' with their families; but that, she seemed to think, was rather an advantage than otherwise at first, as it left Frank and herself all the more independent.

It did not take long to tell all this, and Halidame had time to ask a question or two, which he did with a strange agitation.

'Your absence from home,' said he, 'explains something for which I have vainly tried to account. I addressed two letters to you at your father's house, asking you the address of Captain and Miss Pemberton, who, I learned, had left Shuttleton very suddenly. I had occasion to make a very important communication to—to them—and I had hoped for your aid in finding them. Both letters were returned through the post-office, with the intimation of "not known" on the covers.'

'Oh, I dare say,' said Lucy; 'my father was furious, and would not take any notice of me. Of course my acquaintance with Frank was short, and of course he has not much money. But I always hated the idea of long courtships, and think a fortnight quite sufficient, and as to my father's objections on the score of money, I thought to myself, "I dare say somebody will leave Frank a fortune one of these days, as they did me, and besides he will get promoted, and colonels and generals, you know, are always well off;" so I thought to myself also, "Papa may go, and mamma may go, with the rest of the party to Jericho—to Jericho, to Jericho, to Jericho," and all the rest of it—you know the song.'

Halidame had a weight on his mind which his meeting with Lucy had increased; but he could not choose but laugh at her confidence in the prospects of an ensign, with nothing but his pay and on bad terms with his family, in connection

with the rank of colonel or general, to say nothing of the purely gratuitous contingency of coming into a fortune. But he soon came back to the question which he could not help asking, but almost wished to avoid.

'And you do not,' he asked, 'know where Captain and Miss Pemberton are to be found?'

'Of course not,' was the answer; 'and that was why I kept the picture, considering that its owner was sure to be a friend of hers, and would probably know. And that reminds me. How did you come by the picture? Did May give it to you? May was not in the habit of doing things off-hand, as I do—though you and she were great friends at any rate—were you not? I have my suspicions, however, about the picture. I missed one from my album the day after the ball at the Town Hall, and I suspected at the time that you purloined it when you called that morning. Tell me, sir, was it so? If you say yes, I will forgive you, and make you a present of it, that's more. You have it already, however, so I need not trouble myself.'

Halidame, who had indeed the case in his pocket, admitted the impeachment, not wishing to have his attachment to May made a matter of comment; and more on that ground, I suspect, than because the accusation happened to be perfectly well founded. I have omitted, by-the-way, to state that May was the original of the photograph; but that you may suppose from Mrs. Manton's remark.

And while talking of May Lucy did not fail to tell Halidame of the reason of the Pembertons' departure from Shuttleton—the loss of the necklace, and the captain's determination to pay her father its value. 'The sacrifice,' she added, 'was quite unnecessary as far as I am concerned, and had the matter rested with me I would never have permitted anything of the kind. For the thing was my own property, and the money my father received for it was no more his than—than I am,' she added, for want of

a simile, and choosing one which was not quite inappropriate.

'I fear,' continued the girl, 'that the payment has embarrassed them. I fear, in fact, that they are poor; and I am therefore more than ever anxious to find my dear friend May. But what could I do? Frank joined the regiment a few days after the ball; and then we had that fortnight's acquaintance; and then—you know the rest. But, Captain Halidame, what is the matter with you? You look like a ghost. Here, take a chair. Men don't faint, I suppose; but, here, do take my bottle of salts.'

Halidame was really only a little short of the condition in which Lucy supposed men do not get.

'I am a brute,' he said, bitterly, recovering himself with a desperate effort.

'Oh, yes!' said Lucy, resuming her light tone when she found there was not so much the matter as she had feared; 'most men are brutes, you know; but surely you have not been false to May. You have not jilted her, sir?'

'No, no, I have not,' gasped Halidame; 'but I have still much to reproach myself with. Do not ask me to explain. I must not—I dare not.'

'Ah! perhaps your parents are against it also,' cried Lucy. 'Well, in that case, why not do as we did—run away? and then the thing can't be helped. Oh! but I forgot, you can't find her to run away with. Yes, it's very sad. I pity you both.'

Here Mr. Manton rejoined his wife and friend—quite prepared, doubtless, to find that 'all about it' had been told as far as he was concerned, and not feeling, probably, quite so dignified as he would under more mysterious conditions. Not that he was wanting in outward signs of being one of the most important persons in the three kingdoms. His appearance was somewhat feminine, though his colour was dark, and his stature was approaching to the reverse of grand. So by way of compensation he cultivated an imposing manner, and assumed airs of command with

everybody but his wife. For the rest I may mention that he was clad in immaculate mufti, and had that peculiarly neat appearance, as far as costume was concerned, which suggests that its wearer passes a great portion of his life in a bandbox. That he was not without courage and cleverness may be guessed from the fact that he had not only dared to get married at so early a period of his career, but had managed to accomplish the object under the difficulties we have seen.

Halidame was about to take his leave when Lucy was struck with an idea.

'Frank,' she said, good-naturedly, 'Captain Halidame wants somebody to take care of him to-day. Why not ask him to go with us to Richmond?'

I am not sure that Frank was so charmed with the idea as Lucy; but he was prepossessed with Halidame, as most people were, and looked up to him, moreover, as his superior in service rank, and a cavalry man besides. So he at once asked Halidame if he would not drive down with them and dine at the Star and Garter.

Halidame reflected for an instant. Curiously enough, his head had been running upon the Star and Garter in the morning. Why should he not go? he asked himself. He could join his friends somewhere after he had met Hanger. So he said yes—he should be particularly pleased.

'All right, then,' said Mr. Manton, with a frankness which he cultivated as a recognized characteristic of camp life. 'We have several places to go to, but we will pick you up at Hyde Park Corner at four, if that will suit you, and drive over Hammersmith way in time to order dinner.'

It was then three, near the time

when Halidame was to meet Hanger, and the arrangement suited him very well. So he saw his friends into a brougham which was at the door, and envied them their happiness as they drove off.

The meeting with Hanger was to take place at Long's, where Halidame had contemplated giving his useful friend a dinner later in the day. Before Halidame had gained Bond Street he had fought a battle with himself, and, as he considered, won. When he entered the coffee-room of the hotel he found Hanger punctual to the appointment, and he scared that estimable gentleman considerably by addressing him fiercely with—

'If that infernal business is not already done, do nothing in it. I have changed my mind.'

'But it is already done,' returned Hanger, considerably surprised. 'I sold the thing for the sum you wanted, and paid the money according to your request.'

Halidame denounced his fate with such vigour of advocacy as to deceive himself; and after a few minutes of the exercise he came to the conclusion that he was an injured man. Nothing is more consoling than such a conviction when the previous belief has been the other way. Whatever might be thought of what he had done, considered this subtle self-examiner, it was clear that it had been done against his own wish. This was a grand discovery to an accommodating conscience, and, combined with a glass of curaçoa, raised his moral tone so considerably that he was quite in form for the society of the Mantons, whom he met, as arranged, at the 'Corner' of the nearly deserted Park.

Hanger had expected a festive dinner at Long's; but disappointment is the badge of all his tribe.





Drawn by H. Paterson.

WHAT SONG SHALL IT BE?

[See the Verses.



le Venetien

XUM

WHAT SONG SHALL IT BE?

WHAT shall it be? What song
 Will win your fancy, dear,
 And move your heart to sing
 As mine is moved to hear?
 Shall it be gay or sad—
 Bright as the linnet's strain,
 Or full of unshed tears
 That deaden life with pain?

I touch the keys and wait,
 Watching those dreamy eyes,
 That hide their thoughts, as stars
 Are hid in bluest skies:
 No furtive flash betrays,
 There is no tell-tale gleam,
 Help me, then dear, to try
 And read your waking dream.

Say, shall the song be ripe
 With summers of the past,
 With rosy blossoms shed,
 With sunshine overcast?
 Shall scenes and sounds that were
 In pleasant memories strong,
 And song give life again
 The days when life was song?

Shall sadder fancies find
 An echo in the tone,
 Till we are moved to weep
 O'er sorrows not our own?
 Or shall heroic deeds
 Move us to fierce delight,
 As when a clarion thrills
 The pulses of the night?

Shall laughter bubbling rise,
 Like streams that seaward go,
 And, prodigal of life,
 Wrestle to overflow?
 Or 'neath a deeper spell,
 Say, shall the music move,
 Stirring the hearts of all—
 Shall it discourse of love?

Ah! dreamy eyes, that hide
 Their secret thought so well,
 A burning cheek reveals,
 A silent lip can tell.
 What need to ask the strain
 That youth to youth will bring?
 Love it has ever sung,
 Love it will ever sing.

W. S.

LADIES IN THE TEMPLE.

THE philosophers prevail. Ere long may be expected the last edition of Mr. Mill's 'Subjection of Women,' with appendix, like the dying speech of the 'Morning Star,' informing the world that its mission has been accomplished. The municipal franchise is a fact. An unchivalrous revising barrister and an unimpressible Court of Common Pleas refused the parliamentary. But it cannot long be denied, and Miss Lydia Becker still survives. Like the mother of the Gracchi, she watches over the education of her children. The youthful Amazons of the North are under her guardian care. They crowd the lecture-theatre to hear the young gentlemen from Cambridge discourse on history, on metaphysics, on conic sections. They metaphorically gird up their loins for the good fyfte. Ladies plead their own causes in England and in America. Miss Shedden exacted the attention of those much-enduring law lords for—not days, but weeks. Miss Josephine Hutton, at Montgomery, Alabama, defended herself against a judge who sued her for fees. She did not believe there was an honest lawyer in the country. The American courts have decided that a lady may disport herself not only in 'pantalettes' like Dr. Marie Walker's, but in the short cut-away coat of a man. Woe to the unhappy policeman who dared to arrest the lady in breeches!

But the sweetest news which e'er has greeted the Beckerian philosophers is now wafted over the Atlantic. Mrs. Arabella A. Mansfield, A.B., of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, twenty-four years of age, and 'a lady of strong mind,' has been called to the bar, and authorized to practise law in the State of Iowa. Her husband was called at the same time. According to all rules of politeness she must take precedence of him. What more touching picture than to see husband and wife together in a cause! But how calmly she could snub him, after the manner of leading counsel here, and show her

superior tact and knowledge. Fancy them on opposite sides. What field for the vent of private pique and jealousy! How Mrs. M., with her keen feminine appreciation of Mr. M.'s weak points, would double him up and turn him inside out. The situation may be at times perplexing. When little family matters require the attendance of Mrs. M. in other places, what is to become of her unfortunate clients?

Since Dr. Marie Walker first favoured us with a sight of her inexpressibles, ladies have entered our medical schools, and placed demonstrators of anatomy in a sad quandary to know how to keep profanity from their ears. In a well-known debating society in this very city ladies take part in discussions, even upon subjects hitherto hardly to be openly discussed by men alone. Why should not Miss Becker go to the bar? Oh! ye Templars, beware! Think of the Princess and her college; of that Bohemia which Thackeray has so well described—Bohemia no more when the austere morality of the new régime has scourged and purified it. Shall that noble hall, where Prince Hal was wont to meet worthy Sir John Falstaff, be shared with the followers of Ida? Those venerable stalls in your ancient church, which none but old women in male attire have been permitted to occupy—shall they be devoted to petticoats? Can you yield your gallant right of being the escort of the ladies who resort there? Must the fragrant herb, the flagons of ale, and the nameless mysteries, be banished from your precincts? And the gardens where Charles Lamb used to wander as a child, which Spenser and Shakespeare have immortalized by the mere mention, where Johnson, Bozzy, and Goldsmith loved to stroll in their manhood, and where now green grass and green trees flourish in the heart of the modern Babylon—shall your sole dominion of them become a thing of the past? There are other dangers. Addison tells of a member of his club who

was placed in the Temple to study the laws of the land, and was the most learned of any in those of the stage. It is the competition of the ladies you have most to fear. Not even the change of the company of the green-room for that of your law-books will avail you. But it is not to discuss the question whether the Temple shall be filled with ladies who don the wig and gown, or Westminster Hall with Portias, that we write. It is of a more cheering subject; of woman in her womanly sphere; of those who are undefiled by the nauseous doctrines which would destroy even all that remains of chivalry.

In one of his greatest novels, Thackeray advises ladies to go to the Temple Church, 'not for the admiration which you will excite and which you cannot help, but because the sermon is excellent, the choral services beautifully performed, and the church so interesting as a monument of the thirteenth century, and as it contains the tombs of those dear Knights Templars.' And notwithstanding the slanders which a modern author has imputed to what he is pleased to term 'the moral atmosphere of the Temple,' the ladies do flock there in numbers. Charles Lamb calls the Temple 'the most elegant spot in the metropolis.' Modern criticism is perhaps less favourable, but there are few places more interesting to ladies. Wherever men congregate there they love to follow. When they go to the Temple many of them satisfy a curiosity similar to that which takes them to a Zoological Gardens—to see the animals, and how they disport themselves. Those who truly enjoy a visit to the Temple are the ladies fresh from the country, to whom a barrister *simpliciter* is an object of interest—an interest which has not been destroyed by frequent intercourse or intimate acquaintance. There is no more pleasing duty performed by the resident Templar than that of escorting such ladies. When the service is over he shows them round the church, points out the tombs, and distinguishes the early Norman from the later architecture. Draw-

ing upon his imagination when his knowledge fails him, he replies to their countless interrogatories. From the church it is but a stone's throw to the gardens, and on the way the new Hall of the Inner Temple is passed. On a fine day, even in November, the gardens are pleasant; the chrysanthemums, tended with a care almost equal to that bestowed on Saintine's 'Picciola,' are bright, varied, and still monotonous. Around the ample square are the different buildings. There is Paper Buildings: monument of a Justice's going to bed sober. In a dim court not far away, in the corner of a fourth floor, are the chambers once occupied by a now celebrated judge. If report be true, how often has he there been imprisoned for days—weeks—afraid to stir out, because of the duns who almost lived on his stairs. Then the Middle Temple Hall is visited, left open as it indulgently is for the service of the ladies on Sundays. The pictures, the busts, the screen, the armour (ye relics of Wardour Street), the shields on the panels, in the windows—all have to be explained. The arms of many of England's greatest judges are here. In one of the windows in the middle of the building are the shields of the two greatest Chancellors of modern times: between them, illustrating true English flunkeyism, that of the Prince of Wales. Could not even the benchers be spared ornamental associates? Was the Middle Temple chosen because of the notorious subservience of its benchers in the reigns of the Stuarts? Then there are the long oaken tables and benches where the barristers and students dine during term. The ladies see the gilt on the gingerbread—'Oh, how nice to be a barrister!'

Next comes the proposition that they shall visit chambers. Papa has secret doubts of the propriety of their so doing; but the young ladies are determined, and they have their own way. If they have never seen our Templar's chambers before their fancy has pictured a fine set of rooms overlooking the gardens. Their idea of staircases is derived from

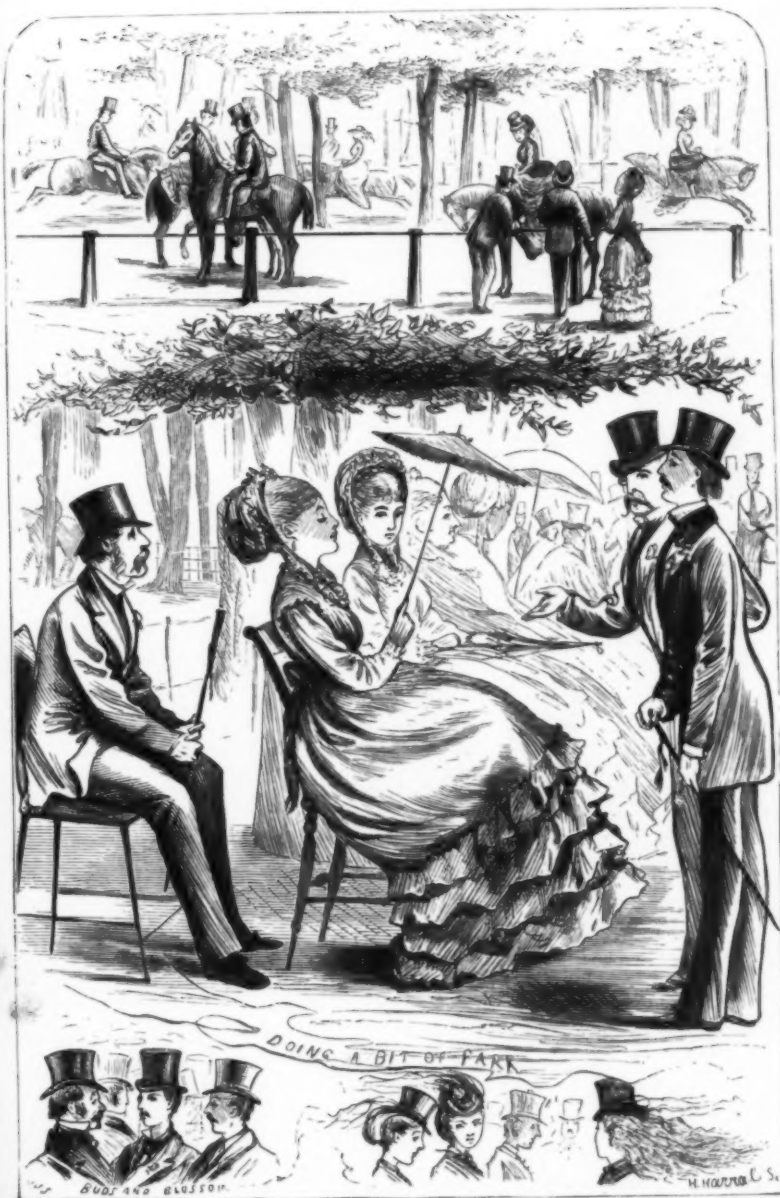
the gorgeous ones of City magnates, or buildings built by companies of limited liability. They leave the Hall and the gardens, and pass through a labyrinth of courts. Most of them are dingy enough, and the ladies ask solicitously, 'Does any one *really* live here?' Having made a complete tour of the Temple, to return within a few yards of their starting-point, they arrive at a court which the Templar announces to be his. It is a small square court with buildings four stories high on all sides. Looking up towards the sky is like looking up a coal-pit. You may almost see the stars in the daytime. The ladies seem appalled: they begin to think their friend is not such a swell as they had fancied. They examine the names on the door-posts. One reads: 'Mr. Robinson—that's yours.' 'Mr. Smith—Oh! I know a Mr. Smith who's a barrister—I wonder if it's the same.'

Robinson leads the way upstairs. Of all the wretched staircases in the Temple, his is the worst. The whole pile was condemned to demolition in 1844; but it stands there still, and probably will do until it takes the law into its own hands, and tumbles down. The ladies are peering about as they go up; at the names over the doors; at the open outer doors, which they don't quite understand, unless, perhaps, they have been at Oxford or Cambridge. One, two, three stories: surely they are to go no higher. No. They stop at the third landing, before a very ill-looking door, with the inscription over it, 'Mr. Jones, Mr. Robinson.' There is a plate on the door about messages and parcels: the ladies must read it. There is a paper pinned on the door, and one reads, 'Mr. Robinson and clerk at Westminster; apply opposite.' Called on for an explanation, Robinson admits that he was not in town the day before; and that as for the clerk, he has only a limited interest in him, and that he is always opposite.

The doors being opened, they all squeeze into a passage about two feet wide, and thence into the front room. 'Oh, what a charming little room!' 'What a contrast to those

awful stairs!' exclaim the ladies. They are reassured, and feel much better satisfied. In five minutes, if they know Robinson pretty well, they have peeped into every nook and corner of the room. They caress the flowers in the window. They admire the photographs on the wall. They were not sure at first whether they dare look at them, but a glance convinced them they were not ballet-girls or dames aux camellias. They look over the books on the shelves, and think there's very little law amongst them. Even papa discovers there only one or two books of which he disapproves. Books which Lord Brougham somewhere says, mothers keep from their daughters, but which daughters love to read in secret—Rousseau's. Robinson has to explain that he has another room, where he keeps his law-books, and promises to show it to them after luncheon. They continue their voyage of discovery round the room, and inquire about his rifle, his fencing-sticks, his boxing-gloves. Then one opens the piano, plays a few notes, and rapidly skims the music. She wonders what Robinson wants a piano for—he who cannot play at all. If the visitors should be sisters, not mere friends, no place is sacred. They open every unlocked door or cupboard, and long to know what is there when a lock resists them; they go into his bedroom, examine everything, in the hope of finding out something—what, none of them know. A mystery attaches to men living in chambers. They possibly think they may find the key to it in the cupboard, or behind the curtains. But no; there are no tell-tales. There is certainly a slight smell of tobacco; the wonder is it is not greater. There is a range of pipes, a few drinking-pots; these, with the implements already mentioned, and the mysterious piano, are the only indications of habit or occupation. The furniture is well worn, but good. The ornaments on the chimney-piece are pretty and tasteful. There is an absence of useless show. Utility seems to be the order of the house.

Luncheon is on the table. Every-



MAY IN THE PARK.

Sketched by Horace Stanton.

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Luncheon is on the table. Every-



BOATING LIFE AT PUTNEY.

Sketched by A. Chasmore.



Habitues



Her first



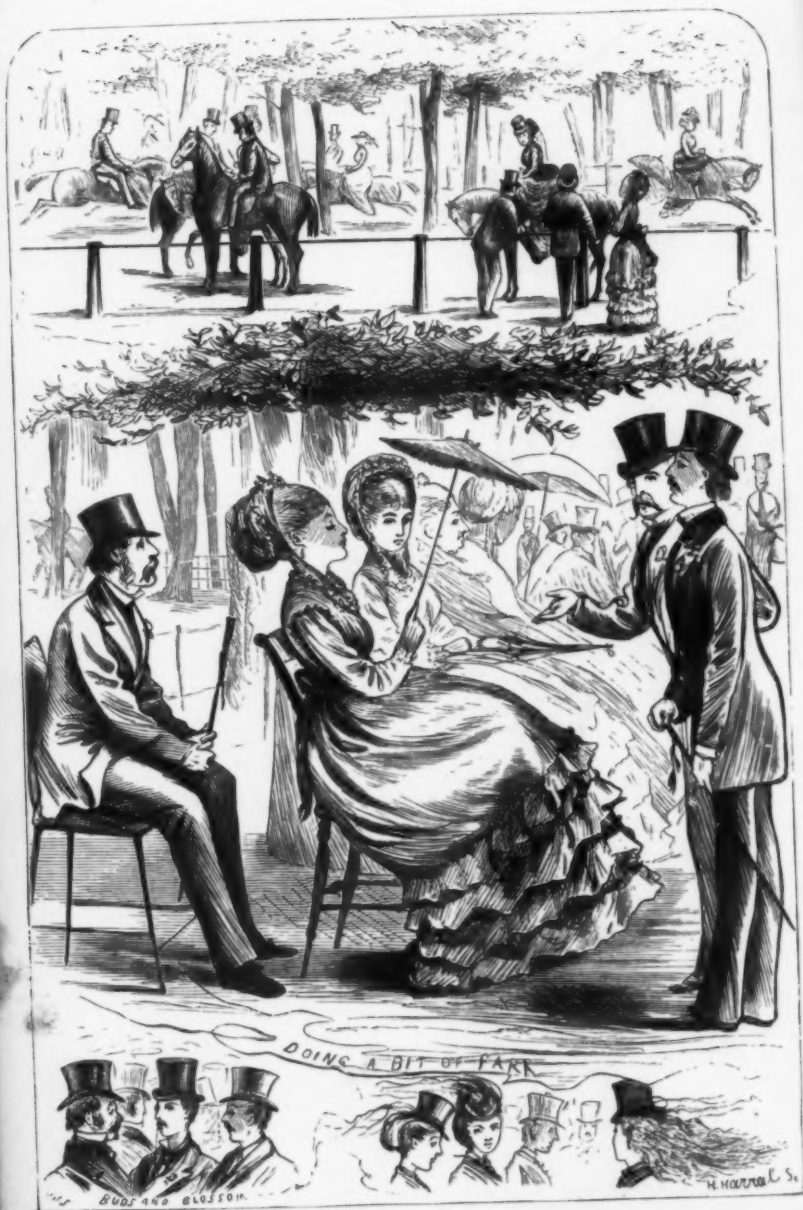
One whose Reign was



Divertissement

AT THE Opera





MAY IN THE PARK.

Sketched by Horace Stanton.

XUM

thing is cold; for there is no cooking on Sundays in the cook-shops which supply the inmates of the Temple with breakfasts and luncheons. They sit down, and fall to with a will. Robinson has to fill the double character of host and waiter. Laundresses in the Temple (the women who attend to chambers are so called) have a holiday on Sunday after their morning's work is over. The tablecloth is clean; so are the napkins; so are the knives, forks, and glass. The ladies discover that at a glance. Then commences a fire of questions. They want to know who attends to the rooms; who she is, where she lives. If, to pique their curiosity, Robinson merely answers their questions, without explanation, they are quite perplexed. Who is this who does all this; *is she old or young?* This is the question they wish to solve, and it is one which they find difficulty in putting. Though at last they may be satisfied that laundresses are not unlike the witches in Macbeth, ladies cannot feel pleased with them. They are the rivals, who make men so comfortable in their chambers, that they become first indifferent, then perhaps actually averse to matrimony. The luncheon is good: the ladies like the champagne; papa the port. Then Robinson shows them his own peculiar way of making coffee. They cannot help laughing at him, as he carries about the little can, puts in the coffee, plants it on the fire, and in a few minutes produces an excellent cup of coffee. They sit and chat over their coffee, or one of the young ladies plays on the piano, or sings. At the same time, from the opposite side of the court come floating other strains. Robinson's wrath is aroused. He tells them how, when he was a student, and was reading for an examination, the same man tortured him from morning until night with an everlasting 'Home, sweet home.' The time passes so pleasantly that they

have no idea of the hour when papa declares that they must go. First, however, they have to see the business-room. There they see the law-books which they were so curious about: they open one, peep into it, and think it looks very dry. Then they look at the papers on the table, and think that Robinson must be doing a good business; but he confesses that they are dummies, mere decoy-ducks. He tells them of his one brief, which came when he least expected it. It was in the hot weather; he had had some friends to luncheon, and all were going down together to Kingston to row. Robinson lay on the sofa in his flannels, without coat, smoking a pipe. A knock came to the door, and in came a clerk with a bundle of papers, amongst the tobacco and the ale-pots. He says he is convinced he never got another brief from the same quarter on account of this contretemps. The ladies must see him in his wig, so he is obliged to robe. Then they try the wig on, and if Robinson is spooney upon either of them, he regards that wig with peculiar fondness ever afterwards. They descend the stairs, and are shut out of the Temple; but as they wend their way westward along the Strand, the thought perplexes the young ladies—'What does he do with a piano?' Had they only had courage to put the question, it would have been solved as easily as the others. Robinson could have testified how many a manly voice had been heard accompanied at that piano; that ladies do not enjoy a monopoly of the love of music or the power of producing it. He would have told that music constituted one of the charms of the merry meetings in his chambers, and, had he been candid enough to own it, that many of the pleasantest evenings of his life had been spent at his bachelor parties, ungraced by the presence of 'ladies in the Temple.'

G. W. H.



POPPIES IN THE CORN;

OR, GLAD HOURS IN THE GRAVE YEARS.—No. XI.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE HARVEST OF A QUIET EYE,' &c.

COLLEGE FRIENDS.

I HAVE but a flower or two to gather for the completion of my handful of Poppies. Indeed, since I began to bind them together, two summer-loads of the bright scarlet flowers have been carted away; two poppy harvests have been reaped and garnered. Garnered? Ay—but only by the warm winds that passed over their array, fluttering the banners of the corn, and while the spears bowed all one way, rising again in a stately awaying when the vehemence of the attack had passed by, the brown land between the stalks was paved with the flakes of crumpled scarlet. Lightly come and lightly gone, frail petals that gave pleasure for an hour, and then the wind wafted them off, or they loosed hold in the serene heat of the July afternoon, and who remembers them any more for ever? So with these unsubstantial, idle annals of glad hours that long ago bloomed their brief while, attained the zenith of their brightness, and then passed, passed quite away, except for a petal or two treasured between the leaves of the book of memory, and looked at now and then in a leisure half-hour. Taken out now, indeed, and set out in a rude representation of the old live blaze of colour and motion; but only to be glanced over by half-indifferent eyes, and then fluttered away again into disorder and forgetfulness, like those oracles which the Sybil used to arrange, written all on light leaves, stirred and disarranged by the least rustling wind. They served their purpose, told their tale, and then the winds might have them at their pleasure. So with these reminiscences, put together with some pains, lightly read, however, and lightly dismissed. Complete we, nevertheless, our gathering, even though at the very next moment they be cast in the dust to die.

College Days and College Friends. Surely these should have a place among any bringing together of glad hours out of the sober years. Glad hours? Ah! looking back upon them, that whole three years seem as it were a field of flowers. No doubt it was not altogether so; and much grave work and many thorny anxieties really mingled with the brightness and gaiety of those light-hearted days of life. No doubt the scarlet tinge that seems to colour the whole hill-side comes from that distant side-view that brings or seems to bring together blooms that, however growing more closer than perhaps at any other time of life, were yet stragglers;—single spies, and, it may be, battalions:—yet with tracts between of serious growth, of barren land.

Still, still,—how, to one looking back, the old days, the old Oxford days,—how they seem to laugh out of all the graver acreage with the illusion of being one great sheet of flowers! We forget the weary working through the day, and far into the night; the manful resistance to the seductive band of bronzed and flanneled men that burst on some warm morning into the room, bent on recruiting for that scratch game at Cowley, that eight down to Nuneham; we remember not the overmastering anxiety as the time drew nearer and nearer for that awful half-hour in the School Quad, before the door shall open, and crowding men hurry in, white-tied and lily-livered, eager to be sitting at last face to face with the worst; the dreadful suspense in some cases until (as the case may be) the Class-List is out, or the solitary room entered and the scarcely-hoped-for but gaspingly-welcomed slip of paper is brought: magic slip, changing in a moment the hues of the landscape of the mind. All this is forgotten; 'the very schools ap-

pear to smile,' as we stand upon some hill-top of life, and, shading our eyes with our hand, look back upon those pleasant 'days that are no more,' the days when we were not soldiers, nor lawyers, nor treasury-clerks, nor anxious curates, but simply 'Oxford men.' The days when love's young dream, and fascinating uncertainty, and tempting newness made life a kind of unreal fairy-land for us, and our brows were not knit with anxious thought at finding how Noel and Alban and Eric all want new coats and trousers and shirts and boots, and will soon have to be sent to school; and how Violet and Daisy and Lily and Rose must have new best frocks, 'for the children are really not fit to be seen, if they should be asked out anywhere.'

But in the Oxford days we were of those provided for, and not of the providers; what little 'cutting the coat according to the cloth' had to be seen to, applied not to the necessities, but to the luxuries of life; and if (which is by far the best training for a young man) the ingenuity had to be directed rather to the problem of *what we could do without*, than of *what we wanted*—why surely there was little hardship in this. Cozy provision of bed and board, many a not-too-expensive mode of enjoyment; society from which, if really the best, a slender purse never shuts a man out; delightful alternation of joyous Vacations and happy Terms,—flying Terms, we might well esteem them; flying fast, even when we were of them;—all fled now.

Oh, yes! what life like the Oxford life, for freedom from care (if but the coming Schools have had their due), for lightness of heart, for enjoyment of friendship? 'I envy you,' said a man in life's prime, to me going up now to Oxford. And I could almost say the same to others now. Yet not so really:—rather it is that I love, I sympathise with the fine young fellows; so able and willing to enjoy life, gathering the flowers by handfuls, never noting (so thickly do they grow) how the petals detach themselves and flutter earthward still as the flowers are

picked. Gather away, I would say, with all my heart; enjoy keenly, vividly, appreciatively, the glad and merry Oxford months. Only go up with a grave determination (not leaning on the broken reed of your own strength, however) to do your duty by God and man, to others and to yourself, to enjoy all innocent gratifications that bend within your reach, only letting alone the boughs of forbidden fruit—and how glad those Oxford days may be! Sweet to enjoy, and sweet to remember; the very self-denial becoming ere long part of the enjoyment; how different at the time and afterward, if guilt and extravagance were engaged as purveyors of the delights that would have been far more exquisite and truly delicious provided by innocence and frugality!

'Why should we fear youth's draught of joy,
If pure, would sparkle less?
Why should the cup the sooner cloy
Which God hath deigned to bless?'

Remember, among the new friends, *the old folk at home*: the hearts so anxious (ah, say not *over-anxious*!) with love that, after all, is *tried*, which, as yet, the new devotions cannot be. Remember also, while you pluck the present day, not to be laying up distresses, perplexities, miseries, for those future years which lie beyond the bright three-years' strip of University life. Gather blithely, with full hands, the bright flowers;—but not so as thereafter to strip your life of them. Oh, be happy! yea, be happy, in this sunny gleam of life;—but make sure that that is happiness that you are following.—For there are mirages in the desert, and it is bitter to come, after eager running, upon nothing but parching tracts of sands, instead of those cool wells and palm trees, which indeed the heart desired, but to which really the back had been turned all the while the deluded pursuit endured.

Well, well, I can find a white hair or two on my head now; so you shall have listened deferently to me (gracefully, as young men can, refraining from showing impatience) thus far. And now I am minded to retrace my steps, and to lay aside the M.A.—even the B.A. garb; and

to become once more a fluttering-gowned undergrad.; to slip off the cares of a parish, and to be simply weighted with the light burden of the next coming examination; to vacate my curate's house and garden, and to become the proud possessor of 'rooms,'—rooms in that staircase which was, as it were, a comb with many cells of bees—cells stored with honied delights; combs easily set all a-buzz, you may be sure. Rooms that I even yet grudge to any other possessor; ah! what intruding fellow, I wonder, is in them now? and what work or what merriment is going on there while I am mentally establishing myself and my belongings in our old place again? Nay, the process should be easy; for I am writing on that very coffee-table which was so often drawn up near the fire from its recess; and beside me lolls the very easy chair from which long legs of this or that Oxford friend used often, in the old days, to stretch nearly across the tiny room.

And, moreover, I am minded, for half an hour, I say, to banish that absorbing nursery, and to admit no bonny boy or dainty maid into that inviolable den (how different now, that they may be shut into my study for two hours at any time, in the very midst of busy writing or close reading;—for two hours, represented under the wretched fallacy of 'a minute or two';—and I not dare to leave them or to complain!); I am minded to spirit away for the hour, the smooth young brow and the 'lips' young red, and the hair's young gold;—and to stand free of the extra carefulness, free also of the far more exceeding joys which they have brought, in their invasion of my home and heart.

And the *plucens uxor* shall be the wilful, teasing girl of those days, making life a delicious worry; and the clerical hat shall be the straw with the college ribbon about it: and the grave array of Tertullian and Chrysostom, of Jeremy Taylor and Andrews, of Hooker the Judicious, of Waterland, Sanderson, and Bull,—give place to the shades of Homer and Cicero, of Tacitus and Aristotle, with always that

select shelf in which three green volumes and one purple made up the 'Tennyson' at that day; and into which Wordsworth had lately entered, and Matthew Arnold only just, and Robert Browning was represented but by two volumes of 'Men and Women.'

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All these things have, for this hour of uncurbed fancy, nothing to do with me. I am an Undergraduate again; nay, a Freshman; and this is,—yes, this is Oxford; and the dream of many years is at last accomplished—the dream that once seemed hopeless of realization, and that seemed quite given up; I am face to face with the grand and venerable City, the Beautiful City of England; yea, she has taken me under her wing, and I am, for the next few years, to be one of her children. All that delight, all that experience, lies before me now,—which is, indeed, now behind me; I have those friendships to begin,—which, in truth, were old friendships long time ago: I have those studies to resume, which also, as a fact, have some time back nearly passed out of my head again. I have come up to Oxford later in life than is usual; but only, I think, therefore more appreciative of everything there, the work, the play; above all,

the life at Oxford; the life as a whole; the life in its details. The realization, at last, of a hope now some time relinquished, makes that even the scarecrow garment known as the Commoner's gown, is dear to me and worn with pride. No need for injured proctors to pull me up for draping my arm with it, instead of letting it flutter, like a tattered banner, from my back. No fear, for me, of that crushing sarcasm dealt, in such a case, by a well-known Brasenose Proctor upon some unhappy youth thus carrying the gown, but wearing the cap: '*I say, young man, the gentleman to whom you are carrying home that gown wouldn't like you to be wearing his cap, you know.*' For my part I loved and love the garb.

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grown older now. If it gave up, somewhat reluctantly, the attainment of those 'old grand visions, it had learned that their fulfilment is forbidden to earth. And something had been attained: something of beauty; something of usefulness;—and thoughts of the *useful* were gradually edging into the mature year's mind, where only a wild profusion of blossom and beauty had been wont to crowd. And the year was content, in its Summer, to rest and dwell in what had been done and won. There might dwell a hush over it; and something of a sighing might whisper among the full heavy foliage in the summer evenings, at the missing that old wild, headlong joyfulness; but the thought passed away again from the faded blossoms to the maturing fruits, and the sadness became little more than becoming gravity, and the quiet only that of retrospective contemplation. And so the Summer passed by.

And Autumn came, while the ancient Buildings looked on unchanged, and now indeed 'an overmastering graveness rose, and the fields and trees seemed thoughtful in their absolute repose.' The summit had been gained, and after a pause full of omen, the decline had come. The old Towers could well have foretold this, but they knew, by experience, that the young year would never have believed them; or they held their peace, not in contempt, but in a loving forbearance. The fruit and the harvest were gathered in, and some return, in the fuller leisure of later life, of the old yearning after mere beauty came upon the year in its decline. Rich colours it tried now for the old delicate tints; and dressed up the grey time-worn turrets with gorgeous drapery of scarlet and madder and rose; even it began to essay some timid return of frail profitless blossom here and there. But a cry arose of Winter coming, and it cast down its garlands just when begun.

Yet some beauty still was found; for—

* When the fogs had passed away,

The wide lands came glittering forward in a fresh and strange array;

Naked trees had got snow-foliage, soft, and feathery, and bright,
And the earth looked dressed for heaven in its spiritual white.*

Oh, if it might be even thus for every one of us, when the Spring's rush of life is over, and the Summer's grave earnest has given place to the tender sadness of Autumn, and this again to the pallor and sleep of Winter's Death!

But now, what have the four seasons to do specially with Oxford buildings and Oxford days? I don't know; they properly belong to *Thomson*, no doubt; but I was thinking of the changes which those grave old towers have seen. And perhaps I was thinking more of the life of man on which they had looked down, and of those eager Spring feelings which are so ardent and irrepressible in the younger denizens of the grave old buildings; and how much less of achievement we settle down upon in our mature years than our glowing thoughts had designed in the pressure of life in those old generous days. So many blossoms there were; nay, it was a certainty that they could not all set, and it is something if not all were abortive, and if, now Summer is passing, and Autumn here, and Winter hard by, there be something to show at life's end, for all that gay promise at its beginning.

Watch on, ancient Towers of Oxford, over the upstart red-brick pigmy growth at your feet: watch on, like a true and wise Conservatism over a spurious and false (so-called) Liberalism! Watch on! We live in an age of change—an age when it is a sufficient plea, with some minds, for the destruction and pulling down of old and tried fabrics, to urge that they are venerable, ancient, proved. Down with the grey stones and the lichen-starred walls of Oxford, and up with the new brick and plaster!

And so let us help on the glorious day when our grand old England shall become a vile copy, on a smaller scale, of Young America. Let us help on the day when, the 'education of the world' having been completed, and the Bible kicked after the Prayer Book out of the domains of education, and the

parish churches turned into lecture-halls upon matters of 'science,' falsely so called; and the College-chapels into gymnasiums for the pursuit of muscular Christianity;—and a stopper thus effectually placed on Popery and Puseyism (the two alone evils of our age):—the golden age of man may at last commence, and the gates of a certain Dominion appear to have prevailed against a certain Institution. Yet it is decreed that they shall prevail never. Words are ringing in my ears that seem curiously apropos to this train of musing: 'And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgement shall sit, and they shall take away his dominions, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

But I have stood in a brown study too long upon Magdalene Bridge. Let me pass on, lingering at my favourite points in the glorious High Street; looking with reverence at any man in academicals; crossing the road with prudence to avoid a man with a huge black cheese-cutter on his head, who *may* be, for aught I know, the Vice-Chancellor, but who *is*, I afterwards ascertain, a Bedell. Let me catch, as I walk to my brothers' rooms, the charm for the first time of that jangled harmony of bells, tinks, and clangs, and elongs; as though the air were full of bell-notes swarming. But first the tall straight tower of New College grows disturbed and anxious in its mind, and anon two bells, after a little fidgeting, alternate clearly and sharply; the Cathedral, awakened by the challenge, replies in a minor key, and deep-voiced Magdalene makes mellow answer from her sentinel Tower, while a clamor-

ous following of well-meaning little bells from other Colleges trying to assert themselves, hardly reach the sublime by contrast with the dispassionate calmness and melancholy sweetness of the tall Warders of the City. For a quarter of an hour these speak and reply, and ere they return to their meditative belfry silence, I have passed, with the white-robed procession, into exquisite Magdalene Chapel.

The dim quiet light; the rich carven oak, rimmed with crimson cushions, and dark against the white garb of the boy-choristers; the tapers that studded the hushed, mellow gloom, and that spread their influence in a misty gold glow throughout it, catching, in the roof where the dimness loved to linger, the stone ribs that overlaced it; the deep, long, sonorous 'A—men!' of the choristers, that fell, as the fall of a long-poised wave, when the sustained voice of the prayer ceased; and, upon all these, the mighty burst, as of a forest's roar, falling into low liquid flute-notes, as from a hid bird in its shade—of the superb organ;—all these, making one indescribable whole, and rendered by associations and the long unhopd-for attainment of a life-desire, intensely fascinating to me;—were well-nigh too much for my stoicism. Then came the Anthem, and out of the harsh brazen crash of the 'trumpet sound' pealed out the sweetness of the boy-voices, clear as the ring of the descended hammer amid the fierce uproar of the forge. Whereupon a strange mist gathers across the eyes, and a sudden choking starts up in the throat.

Ah, well! it is one of the things—I am free to confess that there are many—which I cannot understand; the repugnance which the English mind is so long in overcoming towards beauty in the services of the Church. It is not as though they did not appreciate taste and fitness in the arrangements of their own houses, but, presto, beauty, richness, fitting symbol, become an offence in that House, whose comeliness should be the most cared for in the whole place. I am

not pleading now the cause of fantastic excess, and hybrid Romanism; but that of simple beauty and fitness; ay, and, where desired, of a certain richness and gorgeous ritual even. But it is (or was, the absurdity has much died out) almost funny to hear it said (as I have really heard it said), that flowers were out of place in a 'Protestant' church; and to find a parish in an uproar because the clergyman appeared in his pulpit in exactly the same garb which he had been wearing, with no offence given, during all the rest of the service. It is, I say, almost funny to be told that it is Popish for the choir to appear white-robed, most like the choirs (we seem to gather) in heaven; or that the very same hymn may become Romish if we sing it walking, which was stanch Protestant so long as we stood still to sing it. Yet these funny things *are*, or have been, said or shrieked at some much-enduring parish priests.

Poor men! it never seems to strike our grave and virtuous Censors of the Press—in those interesting Articles (I nearly forgot the big A!) in which our duties are so kindly mapped out for us, our shortcomings commented upon with due severity, our obligations set forth with admirable simplicity (for they appear merely to consist in the adapting everything to the taste of everybody in the parish, excepting to our own),—it never seems to strike these astute layers down of the law, that the clergy are to have any tastes, feelings, preferences, at all, or any good reason for possessing these, supposing that they have them. One of the brightest ideas, gravely treated with approval (as a step in the right direction) in a 'Times' Leader, which yet, at the same time, showed up the absolute absurdity of the notion;—one of the brightest of these ideas was that which had dawned into some clergyman's head—all in a fine frenzy with the laity-worship of the day, or else brimming over with the impulse of a practical joke;—wherein he proposes a plan by which a committee of laymen should control and regulate the manner of conducting the church services in

each parish; but that all *they* proposed might be veto'd by the clergyman, all *he* wished, stopped by the laymen; and, should these happen to agree, the result of the deliberations of both, extinguished by the bishop! At least thus the 'Times' made it out.

Poor parish priest! we often hear talk of that '*monstrum horrendum, &c., cui lumen ademptum*,'—the Aggrieved Parishioner, (does not my heart quail as, 'to the mind's eye, Horatio,' he stands before me?); but who ever heard a word said about the aggrieved (with a small a), the aggrieved Parson? It seems to me that a book might be written, very pathetic and moving, concerning the pains and penalties that he hath patiently and uncomplainingly to endure, especially if it fall to his lot to have first to stir up the mud of a place stagnant for some sixty years. Truly he will soon be in bad odour. Nay, hear the pathetic tale! I once heard of a worthy man who had to undergo an attack of small-pox, thereby melting the heart of his really kindly, but ready-to-be-aggrieved, parishioners—before he dared put his choir into surplices. When he was getting better, his wife informed me, 'he thought the people would be sorry for him, and not like to object, so he put his choir into surplices!' I own I was tickled at the idea: I found myself calculating what it would take—Asiatic cholera at the least, I concluded—to make them submit to vestments and incense, if he should take a turn that way.

Poor parish priest! I repeat. But be it understood that I am not advocating the cause of those dishonest men (they are, I believe, few and far between) who, really holding all or nearly all of the doctrine of a Church against whose errors the Church of England has plainly declared, yet remain in her communion as shepherds of her flock, with the avowed intention of betraying her. I cannot see why Rome should necessarily have all the beauty with her erroneous teaching, and England the baldness and the ugliness *because* she holds a purer faith. Of course if it came

to this, that purity in doctrine were incompatible with beauty in externals, nothing more could be said. It is just this, however, that I emphatically deny. I remember having it told me, with some triumph on the part of the narrator, that Mr. Meanwell had exclaimed, on being asked his opinion of certain rich work contemplated in a church in which his son was to officiate, 'I mean the ornament of my son's church to be the Gospel!' I could not help mentally asking, Why, in either case, should one of these beautiful things necessarily shut out the other?

Nor, when I advocate certain improvements above the category of absolute deceptions—luxuries, rather; matters of *preference*, but not matters of *principle*—would I speak a word for the blind folly that would force upon an uneducated parish things, desirable, it may be, but indifferent, to the overturning of things of far greater importance. The spiritual interests of the people are of greater moment, undoubtedly, than the introduction of a surpliced choir. On the other hand, some may urge (and truly) that, in its degree, a surpliced choir might help towards these deeper interests, assisting reverence, making the service heartier, more attractive. And that you can't make omelettes without breaking eggs.

Where was I? Ah, yes,—at Oxford; and in Magdalene Chapel. I seem to have been, as Bunyan has it, in a muse. However, I find the service over now. The last 'A-men!' has left the lily-carven oak stalls, and fled to the roof, and the choristers, pure-garbed, lead the way, followed by the hoodless Demies, and these by the white-robed Fellows, scarlet-hooded. Then the visitors linger or follow; and at last we group in the ante-chapel;—best for the hearing the out-voluntary;—and the long shafts of the straight columns rise up, splitting into long veins over the roof; and the organ-tide is let loose among us.

On it comes, shaping its volume into the 'Hallelujah Chorus,' flooding us in the dim light;—surpliced Fellows, dark-robed strangers—

ladies, azure or crimson clad;—and the scene, and the associations, and the Master's master-piece, so sublimely given; now shattering into dispersed 'Hallelujahs!' now gathering its might together; now sinking into an angel's solo of rests' acme, and passing away with ranked voices, as it seemed, from different angel-clusters that unite at the close;—all this was a thing to hear, to witness, if but once, and never thereafter to forget.

But in the chapel the lights went out, one by one, beneath the surly janitor's hand; and while I watched these falling stars, the music sank to low tide, leaving the sands of silence bare; and we streamed out of the narrow chapel door, into the High, under the elms again.

Whither shall I wend me next, in these semi-detached Oxford reminiscences? To my favourite Magdalene walk? to familiar Christ Church meadows? to the sedate Groves of St. John's?

Nay, best follow the ancient custom and regular sequence of the place, and, after chapel, wend my way by lanes, and through two grey venerable Quads, to that brother's rooms, who awaits me, a little impatiently, to fulfil my engagement and come with him to dine in Hall.

He is capped and gowned as I enter, and we—Do I bore you, amiable reader? Nay, if your University career be yet future, even the mildest platitudes concerning it will find you breathlessly interested; and if they be of the past, still more will the tamest pen be gifted to recall golden days. If thou boast of the Enemy,—of the party unsympathetic with the genius of the place; with the party which I may be allowed, being prejudiced, to describe as *radically* wrong,—pass on at once to 'the next article,'

Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
O'er this unprofitable page!

Oh, the dinner in Hall! and the rows of men rising for the grace; the High table, and the Bachelors' table, and the Commons,—to which the men are very Oliver Cromwells, quickly compelling their disappear-

ance;—the novelty of it all; the fun of it all; so unlike any other condition of things in the wide world. The freedom, the strangeness, the delight! Then to take a glass of wine in some man's rooms for an hour or so of chat: two or three to meet us; not a regular Wine—unlike any ordinary party, surely: men with caps worn, smoking, chaffing,—in this case, innocently merry. *O si—*

But we had wandered back into my brother's rooms. He had drawn for me the heavy easy chair near to the fire; he was busy concocting tea,—had called across the road, spite of my protestations, for some toast from the confectioner's, and had opened one of those long boxes of Huntley and Palmer's *Reading* biscuits, in which the different species are so neatly arranged in their several departments;—but while he thus busied himself, on hospitable thoughts intent, I had a yearning for another peep at the dear old City, and so strolled out into the air.

It was into a back Quad.—a queer, twisty, out-of-the-way place,—but the porch of my brother's staircase commanded a view of an old gabled part of the College. The moon was up, and nearly full, and threw the peaked shadows towards me.

The cool hallowed grey was darker and deeper than in the daylight: the sky, made pale by the moon, was speechful with glitter of stars clustered in the tranquil blue, and, as ever, harmonized most perfectly with the old dark stone. Here and there, in some kindly room, the bright transparency of a crimson curtain, lit to jewel-glow by fire or lamp within, rich in colour as the heart of a carbuncle, gave a new treat to the eye, that, without it, had rested content with the holy grey, deepening into serene blue, and this flecked with snow-fall of stars.

And I leant against the wall, and mused, and fancied myself in rooms of my own, and what and where they would be, and with what neighbours, strangers to me as yet; and determined that crimson curtains should glow from the window, and add a beauty to Oxford streets

at night. For I hold that all, be it in house-building, tree-planting, doing anything in which the eyes of the public are concerned, lose a privilege and fail in an obligation, if they omit to contribute their mite of beauty—be it even *but* a mite—to the wandering, passing and repassing, unknown world without.

I yet lingered, leaning against the wall, and found myself spinning webs of fancy as to the inmates of the lit rooms. Now and then a clatter of tables beaten, or a confusion of voices, and into the quiet night burst the noise

'Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys,
That crash'd the glass and beat the floor.'

And I wandered away in thought to the far-away homes connected with each room; and the aspirations, and hopes, and tears bound up with these young fellows; and mused as to their probable fulfilment, or disappointment. I seemed at last almost to see the dove-winged prayers that were ever soaring from mother's lips and father's heart, on behalf of the bonny boy that had so long been carefully, if not always wisely, tended and guarded, but that now was launched into a position of self-responsibility,—often the beginning of a made or marred life. And I seemed to gather the burden of these—echoes from an old beseeching of love—'I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.' And to this prayer, my heart, tender with its train of thought, answered with an earnest 'Amen.'

Well, I was called in to tea, I suppose,—but 'tis 'long time ago,' now. I remember that we strolled out, before 'Tom' went down, to the 'Parks,'—grand name to the uninitiated, but, at that time, only a turnip-field a mile in circuit, about which (like marbles in some child's game) reading men spin for a walk, and boating men for a 'grind.'

A misty rain falling now: but we cared little for this, and were soon engaged in earnest converse, which made our feet fly fast round the space. The stars, watery-eyed, looked out now and then, blurred

soon by the thin cloud-veil, and the dim moon made cold steel-gleams lie on the projections of the towers and spires.

A melody, too soft to be sudden, stole from eight bells out of St. Giles' belfry, across the gardens, and found its way to appreciative hearts. The wind played with it, as a cat with a mouse,—now letting it escape quite across to us, anon, with a pounce, snatching it away, —to escape again, and for so long that you thought it had got clear away, until, lo! the sudden paw was laid upon it once more.

Dear old Oxford! I have not, as I

intended to have done, called up the actors, but have contented myself with standing here and there about the old scenery. Delicious, yet melancholy occupation! Other tenants now occupy the rooms where this and that friend used to welcome me; even my own little snuggerly would repudiate me if I essayed to return to it. And perhaps it is not until one stands in the familiar streets again, after a few years have swept away every vestige of the old dear companions, that one positively realizes how utterly and for ever they are gone,—the glorious old Oxford days.

THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

BY A PERIPATETIC.

FROUDE'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.*

MR. FROUDE has let us off cheap. He has cut it short. He had intended to have brought down his history till the death of Queen Elizabeth, and in that case his dozen volumes would have been a score. But he has thought better of it. Perhaps he is becoming infected with the fast-spreading national vice of laziness. Perhaps he finds that Mr. Motley has taken the cream off his subject. Perhaps, like another celebrated historian, the better he becomes acquainted with his heroes and heroines the less he likes them. Anyhow having begun in the middle of one reign he leaves off in the middle of another, and his work is only a tremendous fragment of a colossal description. A writer of a leader in the 'Daily Telegraph' said, the other day, that Mr. Froude had written the history of Henry VIII. at the rate of two volumes a piece to each of the wives. The poor man had evidently never read a line of the author to whom he made his learned allusion; but then a leader-writer must give himself the airs of omniscience, even although the bray

of the ass is detected beneath the skin of the lion. As for Mr. Froude's earlier volumes relating to Henry VIII., we have 'looked into them,' to use the phrase denoting desultory reading, pretty often; but never with very much patience, as we own ourselves disgusted with the pervading theory of the volumes. Henry was a mild and merciful prince, with a special partiality for the wives whose heads he cut off. In this same way, in his last volume, Elizabeth is represented as the constant friend and well-wisher of Mary, Queen of Scots, whilst she, too, had the misfortune of cutting off her dear friend's head. People's heads were cut off with the greatest promptitude and despatch in every direction in those fine historic days. But we have given a rather careful study to the last eight volumes; and now that Mr. Froude definitely states that there are to be no more of them, it may be worth while to state our idea of the work taken as a whole.

We certainly write history in this age with a thoroughness and care of which our forefathers had very little conception. The modern critical faculty and historic faculty were in those days only in their

* 'The History of England, from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada.' By James Anthony Froude, M.A. Vols. XI. XII. Longmans, 1870.

infancy, and showed no indications of ever being combined. For the two thousand years which passed since Thucydides wrote, no historian has ever surpassed him in accuracy of description, incisiveness of language, vigour and depth of thought. But while Thucydides wished to pack within as close limits as possible, the printing press has permitted our historians an infinite expansion. Hume talked a deal of twaddle about what he called the Saxon times. In the last century Robertson wrote a history of Charles V., and received thousands for it too, who was King of Spain and Emperor of Germany, and yet did not understand a word of Spanish or German. You have a quantity of learned authorities in the foot-notes, but I am afraid that they are used at second hand; and then Robertson chiefly followed that rascally Italian writer Gregorio Leti. In some measure we are now getting back to the antique love of truth: the great characteristic of the history-writers of the present day is that they most diligently unearth all possible sources of information. Now that old worlds of heat and storm have cooled down, the different States of Europe allow us to know the truth so far as State documents will reveal it. Every one is allowed to take observations, to break up the soil, to get what he can of the historic material brought to the daylight. All our own archives, are thrown freely open and to a considerable extent made popularly available under the auspices of the Master of the Rolls. The Spanish government, that was the most jealous and exclusive in Europe, has very freely permitted the archives of Simancas to be explored by students. The highest value is now attached to all family documents, and to those collections of papers which the later representatives of historic families till recently did not like to destroy but hardly knew to what use they should put them. One result of this is that with the present generation history has been written with a fulness of detail, with an accurate transcription of bygone national life, of which the elder historians hardly had

an idea. Another very startling result is that we really know more about the sixteenth century than many of the best-informed people who lived in that age. This is on the same principle that soldiers often know very little about the battles in which they have fought until they read all the particulars in the newspapers. We now sweep the whole field of vision—we hear the various sides of a story—we collate and compare conflicting evidences. The dead handwriting of past years starts into sudden life; things which were whispered in the closet are proclaimed upon the housetops, and witnesses unknown, unsuspected, arise to confront the great criminals of history. These great gains to our knowledge of facts are not without significant alloy. While we are making these immense gains to our knowledge of the facts, we are not without drawbacks which go far to balance them. While governments are willing that all the secrets of their national diplomacy should be dragged into light, their errors and guilt be exposed, in calm indifference to modern opinion on those past days, the mole-eyed historians of the nineteenth century burrow and ponder over the records of the sixteenth until they are agitated with all the passions and animosities of the buried past. There is also a grasping for originality; any violence to fact or sense is permissible that will give a new reading to old narratives; and in this way Bluff Hal is a mild king and a kind, just husband, and humpbacked Richard, in his beneficent treatment of his nephews, becomes a pattern of duty in the avuncular relationship.

Mr. Froude has worked the Simancas mine thoroughly and well. His familiarity with Spain has enabled him to give us an exquisite delineation of the scene in the bay of Ferrol when the Spanish Armada sailed forth for England. We have heard of his residing in Ireland on account of his history, and we feel sure that there has been no available source of information which he would not thoroughly investigate. He has also a winning power of statement, a lucid style, writes

capital English; and on the whole there are few writers who can compare with him in the eloquence, pathos, and picturesqueness of many of his pages. There is also a sturdy patriotic tone about him, which pleases us well. Add to this, he has that dash of sentiment, that dash of philosophizing which suits the taste of the day. But also he has a catalogue of errors which might almost rival the catalogue of ships. We shall leave to the sleuth-hounds of the 'Saturday Review' to follow his track and show up his demonstrable errors. We shall take a broader issue; and indeed there is too much of anise and cummin in mere criticism of detail, unless for showing that while Mr. Froude possesses marvellous knowledge of his own 'period,' he does not know much of English history outside his own period, nor yet of continental history either. Mr. Froude began his work in the desire to 'rehabilitate' Henry VIII., and he allowed himself to be imposed upon by the language of the parliamentary preambles. He was evidently a man only teaching history from point to point as he was able to learn it. He then got pretty comfortably through the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary, vindicating the memory of Cranmer against Macaulay, and in other respects highly gratifying the Protestantism of the age. In the age of Elizabeth he began, however, more freely to exhibit a rabid hatred of the Church of England and to run amuck against all 'theology.' He flings to the winds all the moderation and impartiality of the historian; he is a mere partisan, a special pleader, and not, like Hallam or Guizot, a chief justice of history. He lets his 'angry passions rise' when he is not pleased, and under such circumstances he expresses himself like a barbarian.

In the present volumes he makes it his business to write down both Elizabeth of England and Mary of Scotland. *Arcades ambo* is virtually his opinion. He has devoted himself with great energy to the subject of Elizabeth's flirtations, and he certainly enables us to see how very badly she behaved to that poor Duc

d'Alençon. There is at times something very comic in his history of that absurd love affair; and Mr. Froude knows that as a matter of literary art a slightly comic element greatly helps a serious composition. 'Alençon came. He was a small brown creature, deeply pock-marked, with a large head, a knobbed nose, and a hoarse croaking voice; but whether in contradiction, or from whatever cause, she professed to be enchanted with him. Alençon became her 'grenouille,' her frog, a frog prince, beneath whose hideousness lay enchanted, visible only to a lover's eye, a form of preternatural beauty.' Elizabeth jilted him. She had told him awful lies, and Mr. Froude makes no allowance for lovers' perjuries. Let him tell the story of the ultimate rejection.

'Burghley could prevail nothing. The Queen took him in hand herself. She said she would not marry a Catholic. He swore he loved her so that he would turn Protestant for her sake. She told him that she could not conquer her disinclination; she was sorry, but such was the fact. Might she not be a friend and sister to him? In a tumult of agitation he declared that he had suffered anguish from his passion for her. He had dared the ill opinion of all the Catholics in Europe. He had run a thousand risks for her, and sooner than leave England without her, he would rather they both perished.

'The Queen agitated, or professing to be agitated in turn, exclaimed, "that he must not threaten a poor old woman in her own kingdom; passion, not reason spoke in him," she said, "or she would think him mad. She begged him not to use such dreadful words."

"No, no, madame," croaked the poor Prince, "you mistake; I meant no hurt to your blessed person. I meant only that I would sooner be cut in pieces than not marry you, and so be laughed at by the world."

'With these words he burst into tears. The Queen gave him her handkerchief to wipe his eyes with, and in this charming situation the curtain drops over the scene.'

This is the kind of writing in which Mr. Froude excels; but when

we come to compare the text with the authority for the text, we see, to put it mildly, that the version has not lost colour in the transcription. Queen Elizabeth was a great flirt, and her personal vanity, when she was an old woman, has made her the laughing-stock of centuries. We were afraid she was double-dealing and insincere. Mr. Froude calls her mean, lying, avaricious, artful, ungrateful, and so on, with a long string of expressed or implied abusive epithets; in all of which there is no doubt a certain amount of truth, but we allow Mr. Froude a very liberal margin. We see what he is aiming at, and we do not choose to take it in. As he has written up Henry VIII., so he chooses to write down Queen Elizabeth. But we must take leave to inform him that Queen Elizabeth is not so easily written down. She was considered a great queen long before Mr. Froude chose to pronounce her a 'small' one, and she will be considered a great one long after his attempt to malign her is pronounced 'small' indeed. His theory is that she is responsible for all the harm and for none of the good of her reign. She was not only guilty of perfidy to her lovers, but of foul treason towards her allies and of atheism in religion. As a *per contra*, she was brave, she was frugal, and, above all things, he says that she was noted for her uniformly kind and generous treatment of her rival, Mary, Queen of Scots. This is Mr. Froude's view, and we have no hesitation in saying that a more crooked, paradoxical, crotchety way of writing history could not be devised. He has let us into the secrets of Elizabeth's life and reign in greater detail than we had hitherto known, and he has let us see how much her littleness marred her greatness. But for all that, the greatness is indisputably there. Mr. Froude, we suppose by some slip of the pen, calls her 'great' at least once, and it so happily happens, that his own pages furnish the evidence by which he himself is most effectually refuted.

His treatment of Mary, Queen of Scots, is greatly worse. If he has

chastised Elizabeth with whips, he has chastised Mary with scorpions. She has much to answer for, the poor queen! If Mr. Froude had temperately stated the great accusations of history against her, it would have sufficed. But he is almost beside himself in his rage and indignation against her, as much so as Burleigh and Walsingham, who knew full well that if Mary lived to succeed Elizabeth, their own estates and lives would not be safe. He screams out against her as if under the influence of blinded, passionate terror. Not content in dealing with objective facts, he imputes states of mind to her which she obviously could not have possessed, and ignores the mental state in which she habitually lived. Mary, as queen regnant, detained in England without her consent, heir to the English crown even according to the Protestant view, the *de jure* monarch according to the Roman Catholic view, held herself morally justified in resorting to every means for the restitution of fame, liberty, and rights. Mr. Froude is unable to realize Mary's point of view. And if Mary went beyond any allowable line when she lent herself to Babington's conspiracy, it must be recollected that she was virtually enticed into that conspiracy by Elizabeth's ministers, and that it was the one conspiracy in which Elizabeth ran no real peril. Mr. Froude's account of the Fotheringay execution has called down upon his devoted head an indignant reprobation like that which has alighted through the Byron scandal on Mrs. Beecher Stowe. Even the friendly 'Edinburgh' does not seem to like it, and 'Blackwood,' with the energy of old days, pronounces Mr. Froude a 'ghoul.' He denies that Mary died like a Christian woman, but died an actress and a liar. He talks about her red under-dress, her false hair, the scars on her shoulder, the body stripped after the execution, the face once so fair distorted by death into ugliness. We do not envy Mr. Froude the writing of this description. Here is the grandest tragedy of British history awaiting

his portraiture, and he describes it much as Mr. Calcraft might have done.

After Mary is executed, after Elizabeth, whether truly or untruly—who can certainly say?—has denied her intention that the warrant should be carried out, which she could not deny that she signed, there is little until we come to the Spanish Armada. We thought that Mr. Froude had intended to conclude his entertainment with a blaze of fireworks. But this is hardly the case. As we read his account of the Armada, we recollect that Mr. Motley has done it already, and in some respects has done it better. We see also how at times Mr. Motley and Mr. Froude are at issue; they cannot present the facts in the same way, or draw the same inferences from the admitted facts—which is very instructive; for we see with what suspicions and deductions history must be read, and what an extreme likelihood there is that Mr. Froude has many besides his demonstrable errors. That part of the Armada story, after the action and the storm, the flight past the Orkneys and the west coast of Ireland, is told by Mr. Froude extremely well, and at greater detail than we have elsewhere seen. Mr. Froude has said some ugly things of England's treatment of Ireland, but he says some uglier things of Irishmen's treatment of their allies the Spaniards, and the passages are pretty well cancelled.

It is rather an odd emotion to feel that we have now quite done with Mr. Froude's history. His volumes used to make their appearance with much regularity, and we always looked upon them as a kind of useful *pièce de résistance* in our reading. We liked to read them, but we always read them with a measure of distrust and disapprobation, and those feelings were never stronger than in the case of these concluding volumes. We are sorry on Mr. Froude's own account, because we think he has missed a great opportunity. By an unfortunate flaw in his nature, he has vitiated what really might have been a great work, and instead of

producing in any real sense a history of England, he has virtually done little better than produce *mémoires pour servir à l'histoire*.

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS.

'Shall I not take mine ease in my inn?' The answer is, Yes, if you can get it. I delight in the inn, where, the more trouble you give, the more things you call for, the warmer is your welcome. It is often a pleasant thought, in a long day's severe wandering, to let the mental eye dwell well pleased on that sort of picture which Cowper loved so well—shutters closed, curtains drawn, the luxurious couch, the hissing urn, and the contents of the mail bag. All this may be secured at the average well-conducted English inn. Some of the innkeepers I have known have been among the pleasantest, best-hearted, and best-informed of my acquaintance. The agitation is absurd, which, on account of some few sots, always the abhorrence of a good inn, and who would be sots at any place or under any circumstances, would wish travellers to be excluded from the good things which they very sorely want. Still I am going to set forth a legitimate complaint which I have against some of the English hotels.

I got in one night lately into a famous cathedral city, and resorted to an hotel which said all good things in favour of itself in the pages of Bradshaw. They say that self-praise is no recommendation, but this is a mistake, for when you want a recommendation and none is forthcoming, you are ready to adopt a man's estimate of himself. I really thought, however, that my host had underpraised himself, for I was shown into a most luxurious room; a cheerful fire was blazing; the papers were lying about; there was an air of the utmost comfort and domesticity everywhere. The room was pretty full of gentlemen, well-dressed, well-mannered, acute, cheerful, and intelligent. There was not a touch of superciliousness about the waiters, who were evidently anxious to make all their guests comfortable and perfectly

at home. I felt pleasantly thawed by the quiet influences around me, took sherry and soda, reposed on an easy couch, ordered a light supper, and caught up fragments of fresh, hearty, and original talk, which pleased me greatly.

I noticed a number of packages lying about this large, handsome room. The men, with all their pleasant, unaffected ways, had a little too much keenness about them—an unrest evidenced also by a number of Bradshaws lying about. I soon found out that they were commercial travellers, and I only trust they had as good opinion of me as I bore away of them. They gave me a great deal of interesting information about themselves and on various subjects. I rarely have spent a more pleasant evening. But, alas! I was not allowed to conclude it in peace. A waiter entered, transfixed me with a severe glance, and said: 'A mistake, I believe, sir. This is the way to the coffee-room.' I resigned myself to my fate. The waiter effected a capture, took me off to the coffee-room—chilly, small, with horse-hair sofa and chairs, with a draught, with a smoky chimney, with coloured prints of horses and a county directory, with my own very bad company. I missed the modern knights of the road sorely, groaned deeply, and went to bed vindictively.

They were, indeed, gentlemanly and intelligent men, not knowing much, perhaps, of the world of books, but with a thorough knowledge of our own country, and with quite a gift of the faculty of observation, sharpened and improved by constant cultivation. Mr. Zinke says, in his recent volume of American travels, that in his voyage to New York, 'the best-mannered people were the Yankee and New York traders; some of these were buyers for large wholesale and retail houses, others on their own account. There were about a dozen of them on board. They were very careful about their dress, and their conversation was pleasing and intelligent. The majority of them were entirely free from the Yankee tone of voice. They were the very reverse of pushing, and they never guessed.'

Similar commendation is justly due to our English commercial travellers. Some of them are men of great experience and knowledge of the world, and receive their clear thousand a-year besides their expenses, for services which are perhaps not too highly remunerated even at this rate. Publicity is everything to people in business, and there are just two ways of publicity being insured, on the rival merits of which I do not profess to form an opinion—either by advertising or by the system of employing travellers. Some businesses hold most firmly by advertising. Commercial travellers hold most firmly by themselves. They have a peculiar plan for them in the hotel system. Every hotel has its commercial room and its commercial tariff. They pay about a third or a quarter less than the coffee-room travellers, and sometimes, as in the case I have just given, they get three or four times the comfort of the coffee-room. In country districts they have various immunities. When a man drives a gig they often would not charge him for his bed. If he brought his wife with him it was a point of good manners not to charge for the wife. The allowance for expenses was liberal, and, though some saved, others made a point of spending at least all they got this way. They are the most wary and scientific of travellers. I have heard the remark made that they monopolise a little too much of the attendance and of good fares, to the injury of the coffee-room and the ultimate loss of the landlord.

It used to be objected against commercial travellers, as a class, that they were rather given to hard drinking. There might have been some truth in this. When the landlord was generous in his charges, the travellers would be generous in their consumption of port and sherry. Things are now arranged upon a proper business basis. Still they do a great deal of business with their clients over a friendly glass of wine. The shopkeeper often expects that, as a matter of course, the bagman should ask him to crack a bottle of wine with him

at his inn. The commercial traveller perhaps considers this a burden and a nuisance; but still it is an essentially British mode of transacting business. The commercial traveller, who comes to-day and goes to-morrow, giving fortune no hostages, and, owing to local society no claims, often has the credit of being rather an irregular member of the body politic. But I am not going to believe anything to the discredit of the commercial rooms. It must not be supposed that in these railway days the travelling bagman with his gig is altogether superseded. And I could almost wish myself that travelling bagman, at least in the more favourable aspect of business—for the business, as one of them feelingly expressed it, is not 'all beer and skittles.' But as the commercial traveller in pleasant weather gets into his neat gig, and jogs along through pleasant country lanes remote from railways; and extracts a long summer tour from his very work, with just enough to occupy and not enough to burden his mind, and sees all the ins and outs, the byways and corners of English provincial life, and is the honoured and favourite guest of each hostel to which he comes, who, I ask, is so fortunate as the Commercial Traveller?

FARADAY AND BREWSTER.*

Two scientific biographies, of a very interesting and instructive character, have lately appeared. Faraday and Brewster were both of them men of whom the world would willingly hear much concerning their inner life. We regret that neither of these biographies is perfectly adequate and satisfactory. The two volumes on Faraday are too big and too meagre, containing many letters and travelling sketches which judicious editorial care would

have omitted, and giving us comparatively little of Faraday's home life and inner disposition. On the whole they contrast unfavourably with Professor Tyndall's brilliant little volume on Faraday as a discoverer. The book about Sir David Brewster gives that sort of information which we should so greatly desire to possess in regard to Faraday. It gives the 'Home Life,' but then it gives little more; and a discriminating view of Sir David Brewster, as a man of science and letters, yet remains to be written by another kind of biographer than his good daughter.

We must, then, frankly own that we are disappointed with the present life of Faraday. When a gentleman of Dr. Bence Jones's scientific eminence undertook such a glorious subject, we naturally formed the highest expectations, which have been greatly disappointed. As a rule it may be broadly said that all biographies are too long, and this is certainly the case upon the present occasion. The striking lesson for most of us is the example of self-reliance, character, and energy which did so much for the poor bookseller's boy. The happiest bit of his life was the fact of his introduction to Sir Humphry Davy, although the littleness of human greatness is shown in the humiliating fact that Davy afterwards showed a decided grudge towards Faraday. The gleam of poetry, apart from that poetic glow of imagination which permeated Faraday's scientific character as a discoverer, was the story, which is here rather prettily told, of the philosopher's courtship and marriage. Apart from this, his letters are often uninteresting and often wordy. His foreign journals, beyond the mere fact of the authorship, appear to us to be absolutely devoid of interest. The scientific matter of the work, in which Dr. Tyndall's work is almost bodily incorporated, is rather ahead of that individual of whom we have not in general too high an opinion—the general reader.

Yet there are points which might be dwelt on with some emphasis—the independence with which he re-

* 'The Life and Letters of Faraday.' By Dr. Bence Jones, Secretary to the Royal Institution. In two vols. London: Longmans.

'The Home Life of Sir David Brewster.' By his Daughter, Mrs. Gordon. Edinburgh: Edmonstone and Douglas.

fused his pension when Lord Melbourne said a pension was a humbug—his love for his mother, who was almost, of course, unable to understand the nature of his work—the minuteness and accuracy of his observations—the thoroughness, genuineness, and humility of the man. In his account of a walking tour in Wales he gives a life-like account of a country doctor's assistant who did not know the difference between nitric and muriatic acid. At the same time the doctor was haughty and dictatorial to a poor woman who came in with a bottle and a prescription. We sympathise with Faraday, who is severe on one 'who without a knowledge even of the first requisites of an honourable but dangerous profession, assumed to himself its credit and its power, and dashed at once upon human life with all the means of destruction about him and the most perfect ignorance of their force.' While he is in love, Faraday's Journal almost flows over with sentiment and poetry; and we do not wonder that in later years he adds the word *hum!* to one of his glowing paragraphs. The young lady's father declared that 'love made philosophers into fools,' while the philosopher himself writes, 'Chlorides, trials, Davy, steel, miscellanea, mercury, and fifty other professional fancies swim before me, and drive me further and further into the quandary of stupidity.' Thackeray's letters to his wife are love-letters to the end of the chapter. He made Turner's acquaintance, and the painter used to write to him about his pigments. Turner's pigments must, however, have been bad, as his pictures are sadly falling off in colour. When Brewster was tired with his science he used to turn to a novel 'that had a thread to it,' which he found a great rest. He found his greatest rest in going half-price to the pit of a theatre. He liked to read aloud. The Scriptures were studied constantly. He always had some original investigation on hand, and always knocked off work at eleven. Yet, with all his wise method and his thoughtful relaxation, the mental strain was too great for his health. While he

was lecturing in a way in which no man in England could lecture, he also preached alternate weeks in a little Sandemanian chapel, quietly and devoutly seeking truth, we expect, in a slightly sectarian sort of way. The manner in which Faraday was able to keep science and religion altogether distinct is very remarkable. Some of the letters are very interesting. We find a gifted woman of rank wanting to devote herself to science and to study under him. The present Emperor of the French writes to him more than once on the subject of scientific experiments. The Prince of Wales sends him a graceful note, thanking him for his lectures. When the Queen gave him the use of the house on the green of Hampton Court, her Majesty caused it to be put in thorough repair for him.

More limited and more readable is the book about Brewster. Sir David, we are rather surprised to find, had been a preacher in early life, but for all that he seems to have gone to rather queer places and to have held rather queer opinions. He too, like Faraday, fought the battle of life bravely, to extreme old age, and attained to the highest honours. We must cull a few rather good stories from the narrative.

A dinner with Cavendish, the philosopher.—'Cavendish invariably had a leg of mutton for his solitary dinner. On one occasion he announced to his servant that six gentlemen were to dine with him on that day. "What am I to give them for dinner?" ejaculated the factotum, in dismay; "one leg of mutton won't do for six gentlemen." "Then give them six legs of mutton!" was the philosophical reply.'

Lord Brougham in the country.—'Lord Brougham, being indisposed, retired early to rest one evening. An hour or two afterwards the question was raised whether Lord Chancellor carried the Great Seal with them in social visitings. The Duchess declared her intention of ascertaining the fact, and ordered a cake of soft dough to be made. A procession of lords, ladies, and gentlemen was then formed, Sir David carrying a pair of silver candle-

sticks, and the Duchess bearing a silver salver, on which was placed the dough. The invalid lord was aroused from his first sleep by this strange procession, and a peremptory demand that he should get up and exhibit the Great Seal. He whispered ruefully to Sir David that the first half of this request he could not possibly comply with, but asked him to bring a certain strange-looking box. When this was done he gravely sat up, impressed the seal upon the cake of dough, the procession retired in order, and the Lord Chancellor returned to his pillow.

The Kohinoor.—‘When, at his suggestion, fifteen or sixteen gas-lights were placed behind, it threw out a radiance of coloured light which delighted all who saw it. In 1852, having been consulted, along with others, by Prince Albert, as to the best manner of having it recut, he was kindly given every facility of examining it at Buckingham Palace, which he did with the microscope and by the aid of polarized light. This further minute investigation only confirmed the conclusion he had previously arrived at—that this diamond, large and beautiful as it was, was not the Mountain of Light, nor any portion cut from the original body.’

Ball at Buckingham Palace.—‘It was a splendid sight, and I met there with crowds of friends. The Queen danced a great deal, and there was something in her whole manner—so happy and cheerful and frank—and in that of the Prince, which made the most favourable impression on everybody. The apartments in the palace were all thrown open, and the party was very numerous. There were refreshments—tea, coffee, ices, &c.—in one room, and a standing supper in the dining-room. We got home about three o’clock in the morning, after waiting about an hour and a half in the lobby, where some ladies were sleeping on their seats, and others stretched on the stone steps waiting for their carriages. The whole display surpassed in beauty and in grandeur anything I had seen.’

Prince Albert.—‘I have just returned from an hour and a half’s interview with the Prince, who unfolded to me his plan of a great central industrial institution, to which the 500,000*l.* obtained from the Exhibition is to be devoted. I have been much impressed with his sagacity and knowledge and great frankness. He told me of a letter which the Queen received from some Indian grandee, addressed to The Right Hon. Sir George Victoria, Queen of the East India Company.’

Mr. Home and Spirit-Rapping.—‘Last of all, I went with Lord Brougham to a séance of the new spirit-rapper, Mr. Home, a lad of twenty, the son of a brother of the late Earl of Home. . . Hands are sometimes seen and felt; the hand often grasps another, and melts away, as it were, under the grasp. The object of asking Lord Brougham and me seems to have been to get our favourable opinion of the exhibition; but though neither of us can explain what we saw, we do not believe that it was the work of idle spirits.’

Napoleon III.—‘The Prince, to whom I was introduced, presided, and spoke beautifully. He is the very image of his uncle Napoleon, and corpulent, but a noble-looking person.’

Cardinal Antonelli.—‘I was much struck with Cardinal Antonelli, and a more interesting person I never met with. His looks, his manner and his intelligence, were all of a high order. He was tall, thin, and sallow, dressed in a singular blue cloth dress like a dressing-gown, with red buttons.’

Mr. Disraeli.—‘At an interview with Mr. Disraeli yesterday I was the last of about twenty that came into the room; and having been announced by name, Disraeli walked half-way up his long drawing-room, and said that it was a long time since he had the pleasure of meeting with me. I had utterly forgotten having ever met him, but I began to remember that Mr. Lockhart brought him one day to Allerton when he was a very young man.’

Mr. Gladstone — The Princess of Wales.—‘Dr. Lyon Playfair and I

waited in the receiving-room [of the Athenæum] till Mr. Gladstone came to take us to the *levée* in his carriage. There are to be no fewer than one hundred and eighty-three presentations to-day; and as Mr. Gladstone had to attend a meeting of the Cabinet he wrote to General Knollys to ask him to make our reception early. He made it the first. Mr. Gladstone having told the police that we were to be admitted early at a private door, they succeeded with much difficulty in forcing us past the innumerable obstacles by which the street was blocked up. Mr. Gladstone was called in alone—I presume from the awkwardness of keeping a Cabinet Minister waiting. Some time elapsed before we were admitted. The attendants of the Prince and Princess were not numerous. The Princess is truly beautiful and most intellectual-looking; but I was told she varied very considerably, and this accounts for the different characters of her photographs.

In his old age Sir David was married, and a little girl was born to him. He must have been nearly eighty when he caught the whooping-cough. He was an astonishing man. The mere catalogue of his productions occupies twenty-four pages. A great deal of his biography, and an interesting section of Faraday's, are occupied with religious matters, into which it is not our province to enter. It would be a good thing if Faraday's wise reticence in these matters were more generally observed by scientific men. When we read the writings of Professor Huxley and Dr. Tyn-dall, and see their undisguised irreligious drift, we may fall back on

the still greater names of Faraday and Brewster, who held so truly to Bacon's wise axiom, that there should 'be given unto faith the things that are faith's.'

A very interesting and able little work, published lately by one of our most distinguished naturalists, A.R. Morris, on the 'Difficulties of Darwinism,'* contains a correspondence with Professor Huxley, which is certainly not the best omen for the peace and prosperity of the next meeting of the British Association. Into the scientific merits of this remarkable publication we cannot here enter. We are not quite sure that Mr. Morris fully recognizes that after all Dr. Darwin, whatever his own conviction may be, gives his theory as an hypothesis. Often as the monstrous character of this theory has been commented on, we have never seen it dealt with so curtly and convincingly before, as by Mr. Morris. Professor Huxley, in a letter which we shall forbear to quote, gets into an unphilosophic tone of mind. It is a great merit of such biographies as those of Faraday and Brewster, that they show that science need not be brought into conflict with religion, and that if this happens it is not altogether so impossible that religion should have the best of it, and that men of the highest intellect may be both Christians and philosophers, bringing the spirit of religion into the pursuit of science, and the methods and spirit of science into the investigation and practice of religious truth.

* 'Difficulties of Darwinism, with a Preface and a Correspondence with Professor Huxley.' By the Rev. F. O. Morris, Rector of Nunburnholme. Longmans.



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STUDIES FROM LIFE AT THE COURT OF ST. JAMES'S.
THE QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS.

Drawn by the late George H. Thomas. Engraved by William L. Thomas